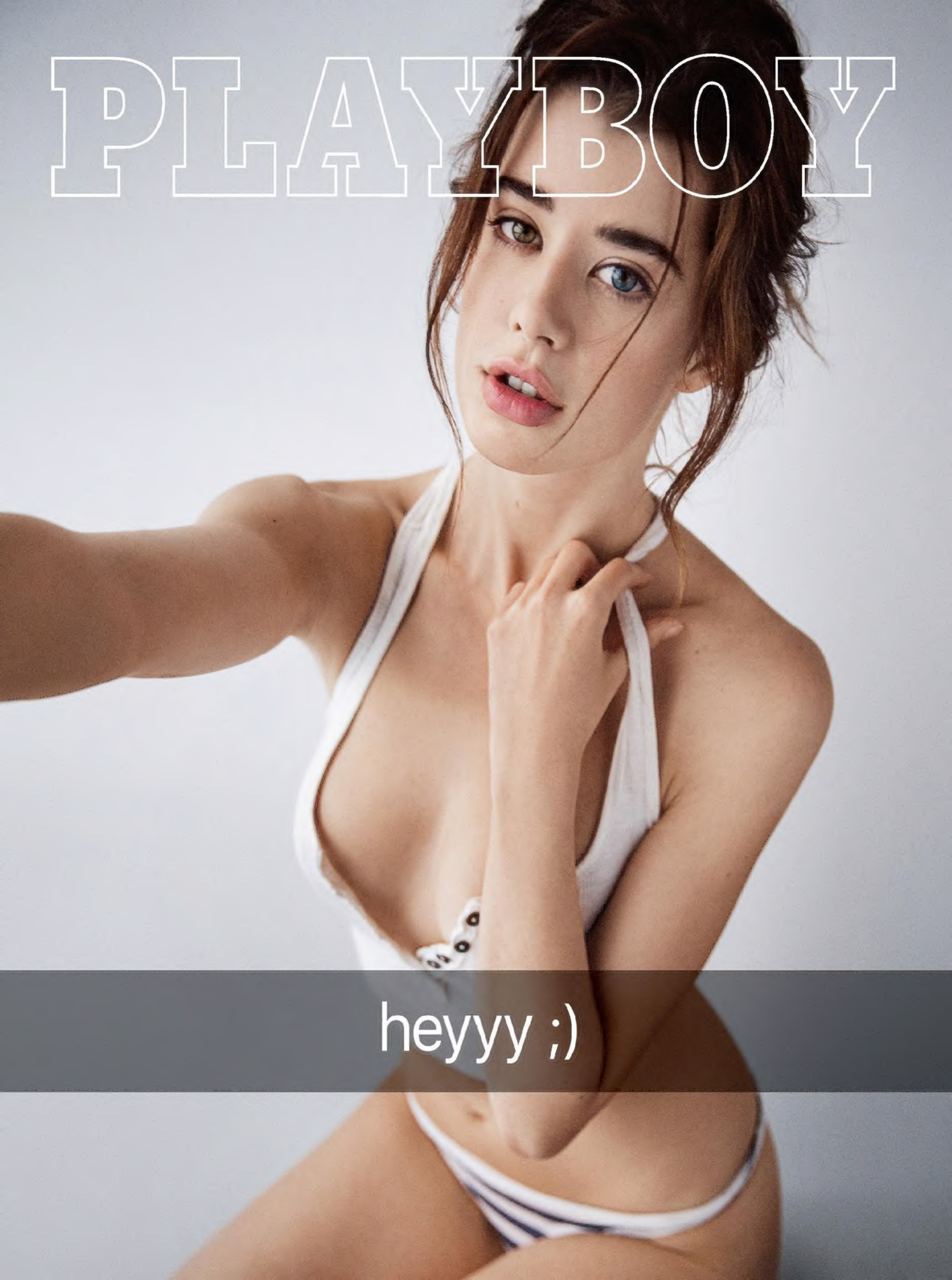


A woman with long brown hair and blue eyes is posing for a photo. She is wearing a white halter top and has her hand near her neck. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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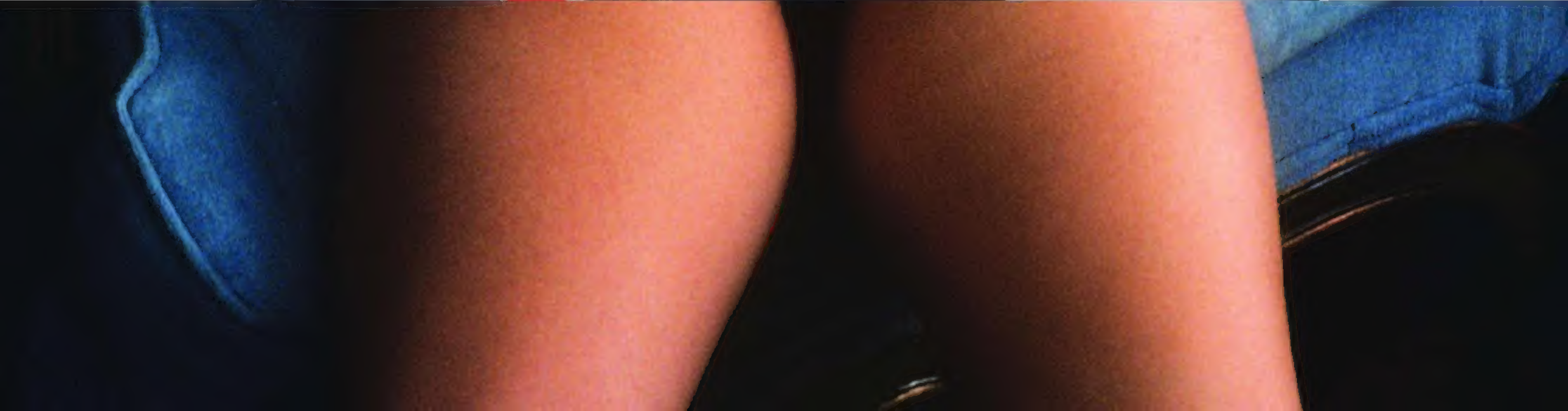
heyyy ;)







THE SPIRIT LIVES ON.







MEET Miss Blackheart®

Introducing Kayla Collins, your 2016 Miss Blackheart. Readers and fans voted, and we can promise she's bold, brazen and bawdy enough to carry the title.

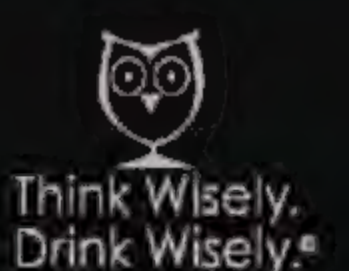
GET TO KNOW KAYLA

Kayla's sexy and seductive attitude steals the hearts of everyone she meets. Touring the world as a DJ, Kayla proves that she can turn up in more ways than one. When she's not captivating a crowd, she's winning over the camera with her seductive stare.



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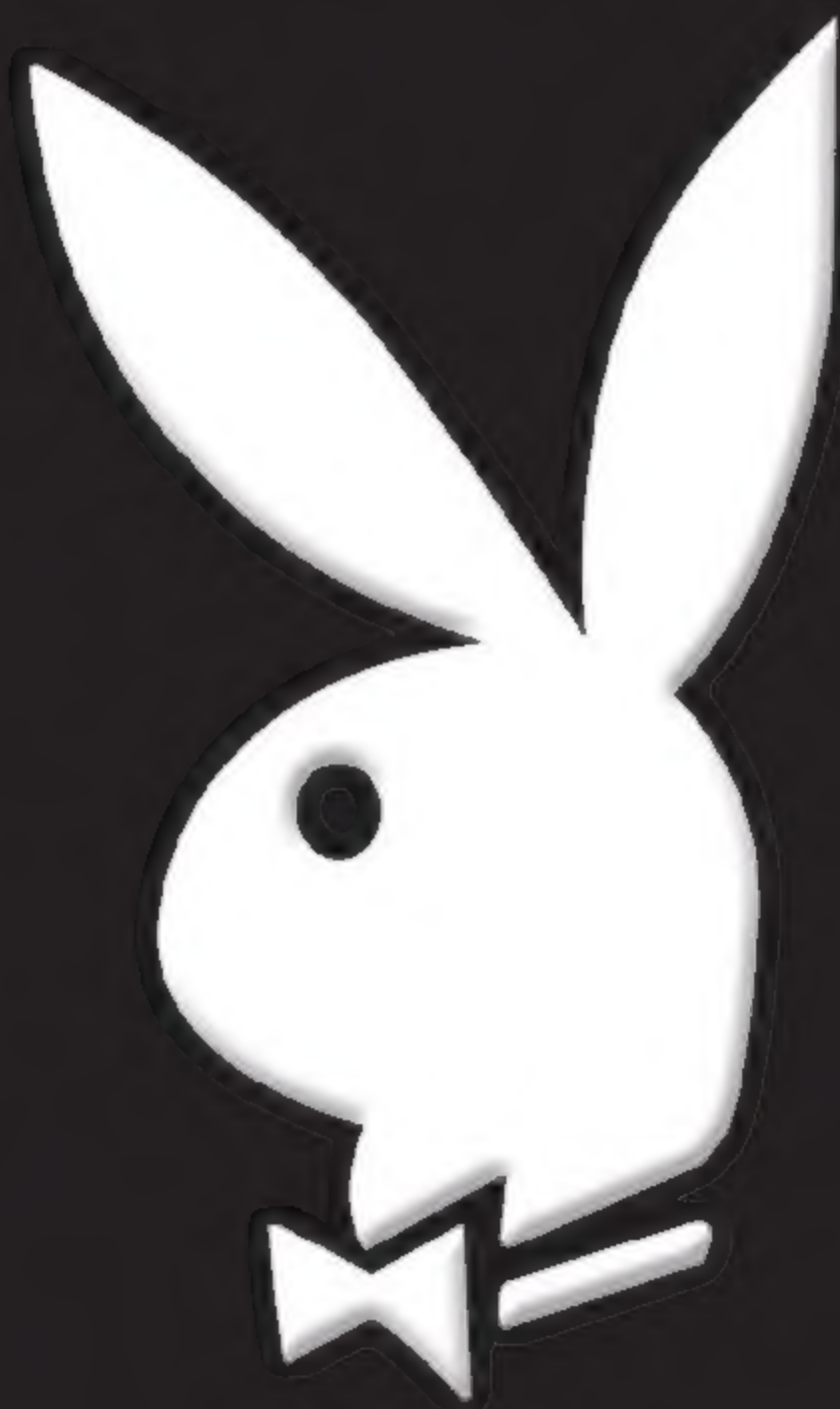
Xoxo,
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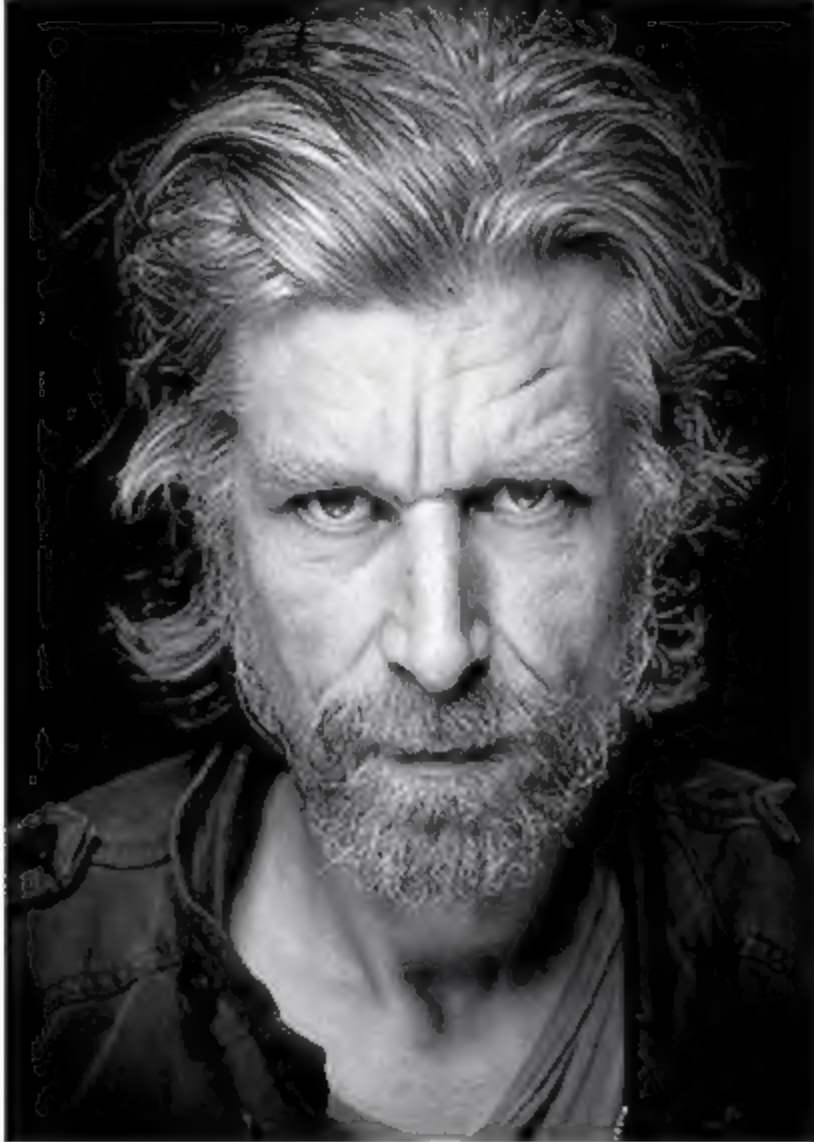
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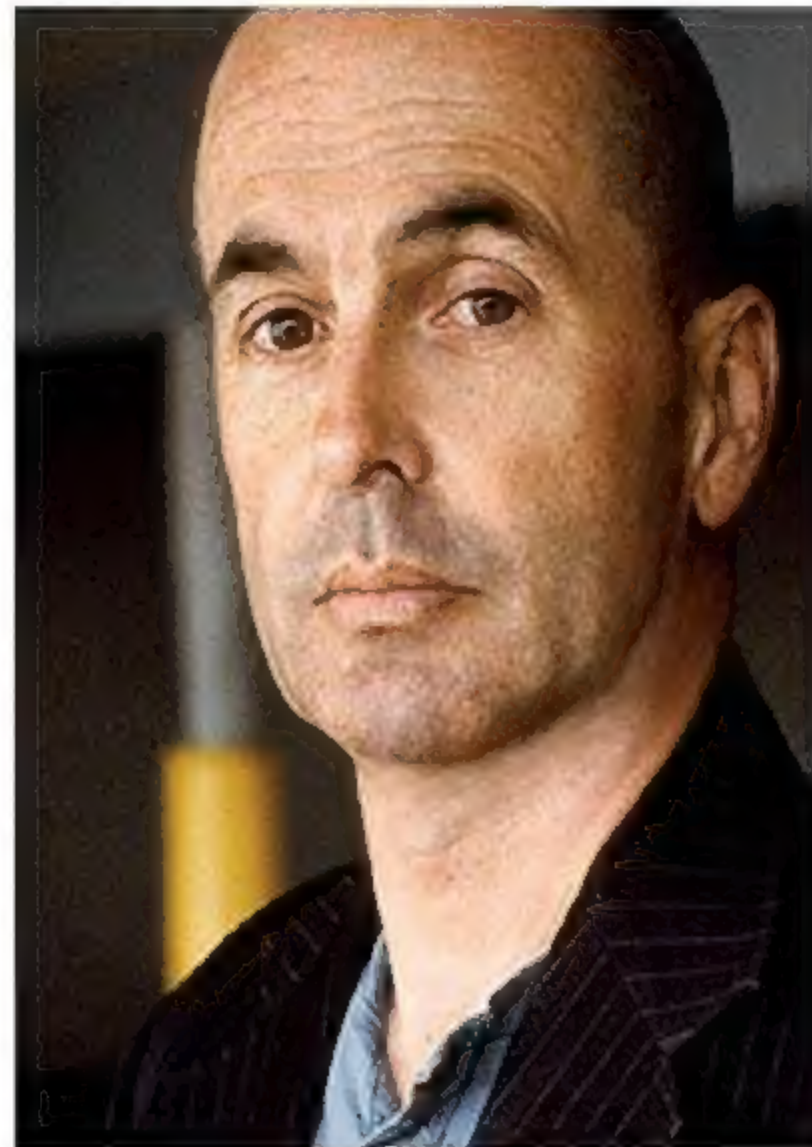
Don Winslow

After plumbing the psychopathy of Mexican drug lords in his novel *The Cartel*, which *The New York Times* named a best book of 2015, Winslow turns his eye to crime in ocean-front San Diego. *Boone Daniels's Rogue Ride* is a short noir fiction about a murder, a corrupt police department and one investigator's attempt to bring justice to the wrongly accused. Surf's up.



Karl Ove Knausgaard

The literary giant makes high drama of the banality of daily existence. From the fifth volume of his autobiographical *My Struggle*, making its U.S. debut this month, comes *The Morning After*, an account of the author's formative erotic experience: his discovery of masturbation. It exemplifies the power of his work by revealing, through the particulars of one man's life, our irreducible humanity.



Rachel Rabbit White

We've been in the advice business since 1953. No topic, regardless of how commonplace, degenerate or downright weird, has been off-limits for our Advisor. We now hand those reins to a woman prepared to help you navigate contemporary sex and love. Meet Rachel Rabbit White, the new Playboy Advisor. Prepare to talk about sex as you never have before.



Theo Wanner

To shoot cover model Sarah McDaniel for her pictorial *Who Is Sarah McDaniel and Why Are We Obsessed With Her?* Wanner drew on his impressive career of capturing intimate moments with celebrities—including Adele, Kim Kardashian and Taylor Swift, natch—to create a style of portraiture that's at once intimate, raw and spontaneous.



Ture Lillegraven

How do you photograph two of the funniest women on TV? Easy: Turn on the flash and try to keep up. After all, Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson—the stars of *Broad City* and subjects of this month's 20Q—don't need much in the way of direction. They're a (comedic, female, eccentric) force unto themselves, and Lillegraven has the talent to keep pace.



Javier Valadez

My Deportation is the story of an American ripped from a life he'd built from scratch. En route to redemption after misdemeanor convictions, Valadez was injecting new life into the Dallas arts scene until the father and fiancé was awakened one night by armed immigration officers. His story is a reminder that this country can be a cruel place for the foreign-born and undocumented.

Erin Gloria Ryan

The former managing editor of *Jezebel* explains why the resurgence of the intrauterine device, or IUD, represents a revolution in contraception. With an election looming and health care rights caught in Republican crosshairs, *God Bless Birth Control* makes clear the high stakes involved in giving women unprecedented control over their reproductive choices.



Bret Easton Ellis

The author of *American Psycho* and *Less Than Zero*—and foremost chronicler of human depravity—has a few thoughts on contemporary carnality. *Modern Sexuality: A Case Study* traces the changing landscape of American sex and pornography, from the innocent hedonism of the 1970s to our current trigger-warning culture, and deconstructs how PLAYBOY changed it all.





MARK NASON.
LOS ANGELES





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ON THE COVER Sarah McDaniel, shot by Theo Wenner. Our Rabbit loves the social scene, but he'll take a private neck nuzzle with Sarah any day.



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NO FILTER

**“Women’s magazines
tell us if you don’t have your
shit together by age five,
you’re
screwed.”**

“The two sexes are on different time-tables, and maybe it’s because guys see in black-and-white while women see in color. Men are very visual; women are cerebral. I’ve become cognizant of that as I’ve gotten older. It’s what makes it hard for us to communicate. But I don’t chastise men for it, because women are equally crazy. I want the genders to hear that and be okay with it. Own it.”

Iliza Shlesinger hosts TBS’s new relationship game show, Separation Anxiety.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN MONICK



DRINKS

RETHINKING THE MODERN COCKTAIL

The modern cocktail was in need of a hard reset, and this drink, the gold pal, definitively achieves that. It's simple yet sophisticated, unpretentious but not combatively so (like, say, an artisanal Long Island iced tea). The ingredients are excellent, but they are few. It comes courtesy of David Meehan, world-class bartender and one of the founders of New York's seminal neo-speakeasy PDT, and is a twist on the classic old pal. All three spirits in this version are gold-hued, hence the name. The bright, melony cucumber garnish complements the ingredients' savory notes. The resulting cocktail is balanced and surprising and makes sense on its own without slavishly referencing the 1930s and 1950s. As such, it's very right now. The formula is easy enough to adapt: an excellent spirit, a good vermouth and a quality aperitif, stirred over ice and served with an interesting garnish. Deploy with gusto in other drinks such as the old pal (2 oz. rye, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. dry vermouth, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Campari), the black and white (1 oz. each gin, sweet vermouth and green Chartreuse) and the presidente (2 oz. gin, 1 oz. blanc vermouth, $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. curaçao).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT

GOLD PAL 2 oz. Siete Leguas reposado tequila • $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Noilly Prat Ambré vermouth • $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Benedictine
Stir with ice and strain into a chilled old-fashioned glass filled with one large ice cube. Garnish with a cucumber spear.

WH WILLIAM HENRY



WILLIAMHENRY.COM



DRINKS

How to Pick Up Your Bartender

The owner of Brooklyn's Leyenda tells you how to ask her for a date

I've been bartending for more than 10 years in all sorts of bars in all sorts of countries. I've seen pickups that have gone incredibly well and have wanted to ask the guy (or lady, for that matter) about his technique and just how he did it. Much more often, though, I've seen epic train wrecks, just crash-and-burn types of scenarios—the kind of thing that makes me want to hide behind my bar to avoid the shrapnel. But sometimes I can't escape, and that's because it's me they're trying to come on to. Want to pick up a bartender? Here's the approach:

You know what's great? Nice people. So be nice. And be chatty. I love it when someone at my bar actually wants to chat rather than stare at his cell phone. It's a breath of fresh air and sure to get my attention. That said, Friday night at 10:30 isn't the time to ask me my life story.

I owe you *nothing*. Sorry, but just because you're buying a drink and tipping handsomely doesn't mean you own me. I work in the hospitality industry. That means my job is to be nice to you and—you guessed it—serve you drinks. Nothing else.

I'm good at my job and I like it. A lot of people in this field are here because they love it, and some have left other, more mainstream jobs to be here. Don't assume because I sling drinks that I'm a failed actress/singer/model. Bartending is a career. If you're trying to pick me up, you should think what I do is cool, because it is.

To my bros out there: Don't get upset if you're served a drink that's pink or in a coupe glass. That's just being douchey. No self-respecting bartender will go home with someone who cares about something so stupid. I can

drink mezcal or scotch or rye on the rocks—why can't you enjoy that pink drink? Get rid of the outdated cocktail biases and enjoy.

Ask if you can buy me a drink. Key word here: ask. I may not want one. And if you do buy me one, ask what I like. This goes without saying when you're trying to pick up anyone—be it the bartender or the lady sitting next to a vacant chair. If you're well versed in cocktails, suggest one you've had before and ask if I've ever had it or would like to try it. Do I like manhattans? Why yes, I do! Have I ever had a Bensonhurst? Maybe not. (See recipe at right—if you like the classic manhattan, ordering one of these could be good for you, or for her.)

If you have the nerve to leave your number on your receipt, you should have the nerve to tell me you've done so. When you pay, say you'd love to take me out sometime and that your number is on the receipt. Don't ask for my number. That's awkward, and I may not want to give it.

The best thing to do is become a regular and get to know the bartender. I've become good friends (and yes, scored a few dates) with guys on the other side of the bar. Generally it's because they've come in again and again. It's nice to know the bartender, and it's nice for us to know you.

And here's the drink I'd want you to buy (or make for) me:



The Bensonhurst

1½ oz. rye whiskey

¾ oz. dry vermouth

½ oz. Cynar

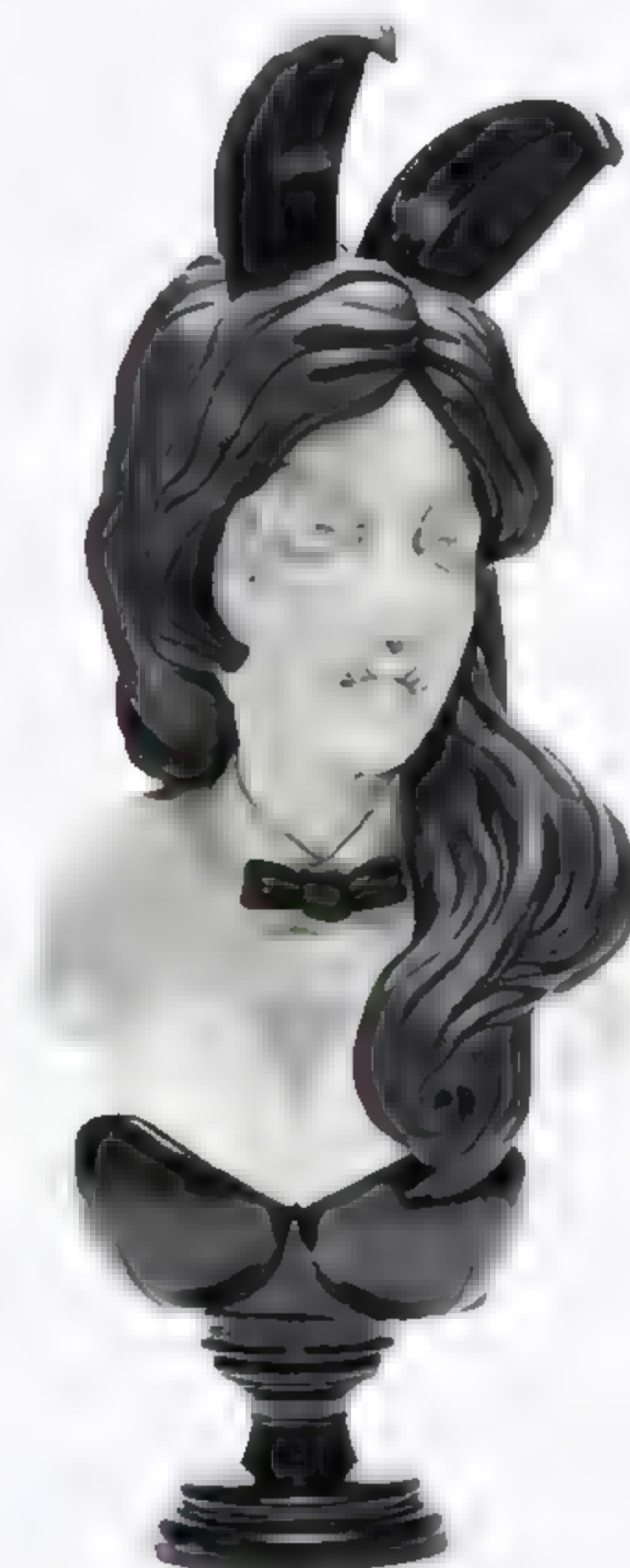
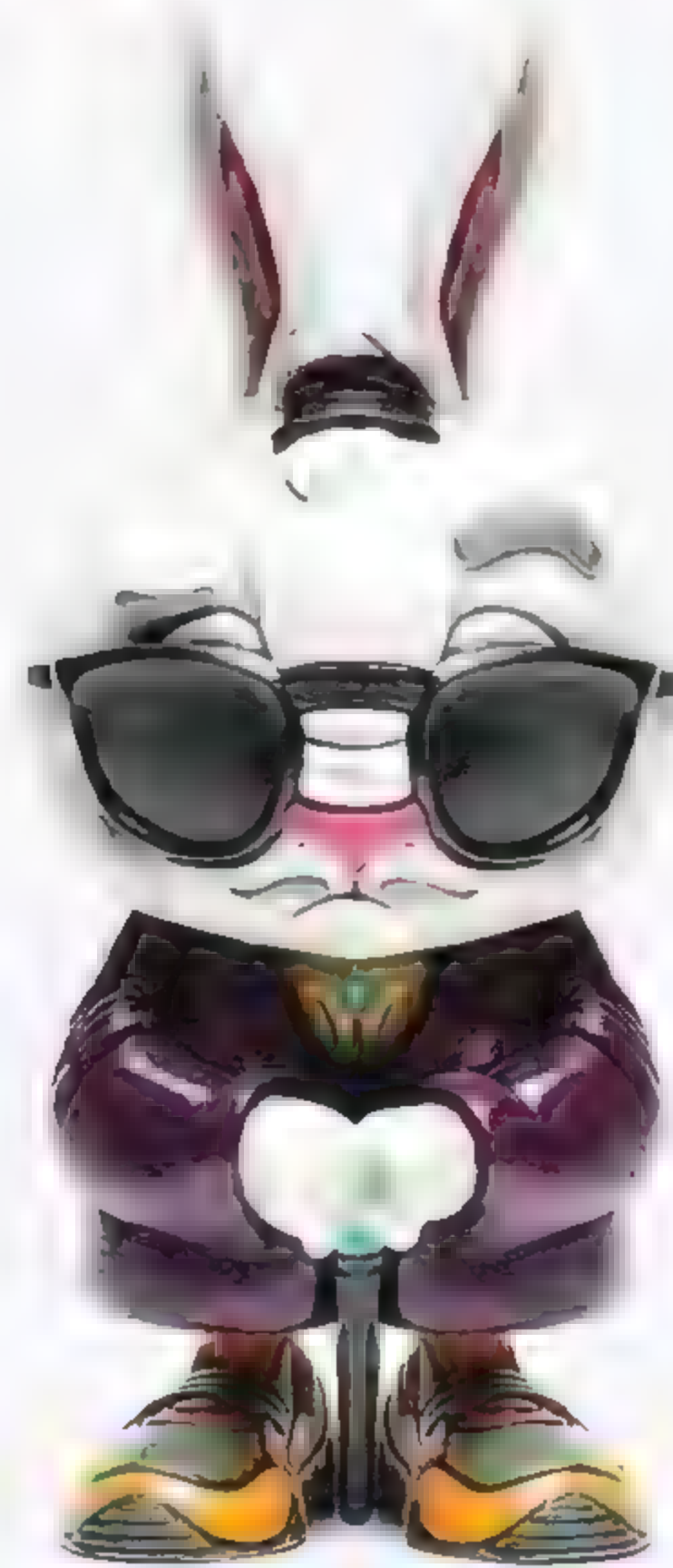
½ oz. maraschino liqueur

Stir in a pitcher filled with ice, strain into a cocktail glass and serve with a lemon twist.

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DRINKS

Where to Drink in Havana Before It Becomes Margaritaville

Charles Joly made a name for himself in the rarefied world of molecular mixology at the Aviary in Chicago and now consults for some of the world's top bars and spirits companies. But sometimes even the most highly skilled bartenders just want a damned fine daiquiri on a hot day. The well-traveled Joly counts Havana as a necessary pilgrimage for any serious barman. With travel restrictions loosening and development on the rise, it's only a matter of time before the magic of Cuba's transitional moment has passed. Here are Joly's notes on where to drink in Havana right now.

El Floridita: Obispo No. 557 esq. a Monserrate
“Arguably the most famous bar in Cuba, El Floridita was a haunt for celebrities during Prohibition and the place where Hemingway preferred to drink his daiquiris. Today it is home to legendary Cuban bartender Constantino. Tourist buses come and go, so post

up at the bar instead of slurping down a daiquiri and moving on. Once the bartenders recognize you're not just a flashbulb tourist, things warm up. This is the ‘cradle of the daiquiri,’ so let the barkeeps do their thing. The daiquiris are blended, as they have been for years, and go down easy. Order up a *mulata* (essentially a daiquiri with dark rum and coffee liqueur).”

Hotel Nacional de Cuba: Calle 21 y O

“The Hotel Nacional drips with history. Don't expect a slick, modern hotel but rather savor what has been preserved and restored over the past century until the multinationals inevitably start building in town. This location gave birth to several classic drinks: Try the namesake Hotel Nacional (rum, pineapple juice, apricot liqueur and lime juice) or a Mary Pickford (rum, pineapple juice, grenadine and maraschino liqueur). Then head out to the lawn and grab a

table next to the 19th century coastal cannons, relics that still stand guard over the bay.”

Dos Hermanos: Avenida del Puerto No. 304

“One of the oldest bars in town, Dos Hermanos was another hot spot during Cuba's heyday. Wander to the nearby craft market in a port warehouse for Cuban mementos. A light breeze drifts through the open doors. Enjoy the live music and order a good old Cuba libre: simply rum, Coke and lime juice.”

La Bodeguita del Medio: Empedrado No. 207

“Pick up the literary theme again and head to this spot favored by Pablo Neruda and Gabriel García Márquez. This is one place where the bartenders will never complain about the extra work of muddling up a fresh cocktail. It can be tourist heavy at times, so claim a spot, wait for the wave to subside and start working on your next novel.”



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From dominating the day to owning the night, great taste is all about having confidence in any scene. Here, PLAYBOY teams up with EFFEN® Vodka to highlight the fresh products and style that will change your game as you go from the boardroom to the bar to the beach.

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THE SCENE DAILY HUSTLE

Whether you check into the office, studio or co-working space, stay confident with these classed-up finds

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IT'S FIVE O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE

There is only one rule on vacation: It's five o'clock somewhere. Whether you find yourself finishing off an epic day of deep-sea fishing, big-wave surfing, or sunbathing, time away is about unwinding. Try a flavored EFFEN® Vodka and you're on your way.

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Maximize your night out with bottle service. It's a great way to celebrate the end of the weekly grind. You'll bypass the line, get escorted to your table and toast with EFFEN® Vodka.



EFFENVODKA.COM

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THE SCENE GETAWAY

From the guys' weekend away to the island cruise with your leading lady, be sure to carve out chill time away from the grind

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THE LINEN LIFE

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PASSING DETAILS

You've planned all the vacation details to the hour. Now focus on the the understated ones of your trip. A stylish passport case will set you apart as you take your game global. liberoferrero.com

UNDERSTATED COOL

Keep your cool under the radar with just a lil bit of flash. Try sunglasses with unique frames for the right amount of shine without going overboard. retrosuperfuture.com



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FIT FOR A KING

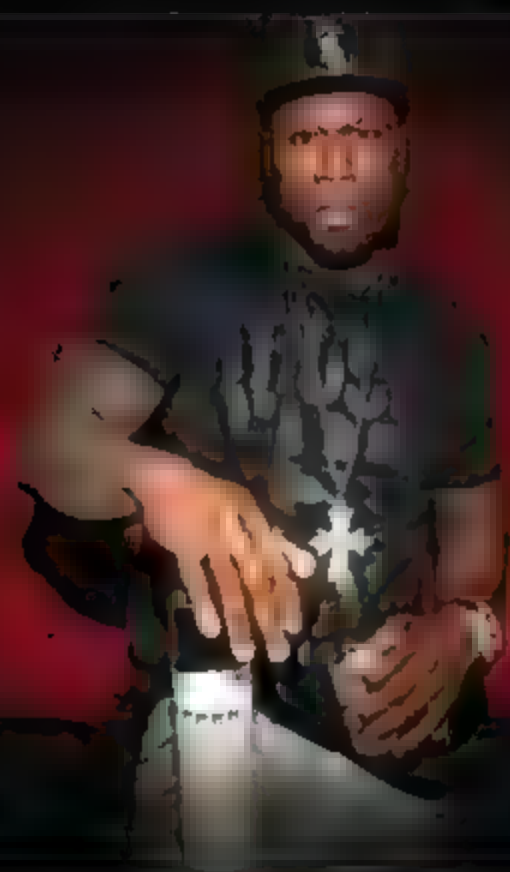
From the Dutch word for smooth, EFFEN® Vodka is the go-to brand of rapper and entrepreneur 50 Cent, bringing **LIQUID LUXURY®** to any scene with its crisp, refreshing finish. EFFENVODKA.COM



EFFEN® CUCUMBER VODKA CUCUMBER COOLER

1.5 parts EFFEN® Cucumber Vodka
3 parts soda

Pour vodka over ice in a tumbler. Top with soda and garnish with a lemon wedge.



THE SCENE NIGHTLIFE

Turn up and turn heads with these stylish picks that will make you stand out at any party



THE UN-FORMAL BLAZER

Tuxedos aren't just for black tie anymore. Pair this tux-style blazer with a simple T-shirt and prepare for all eyes on you. asos.com



CLASSY TIMES

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BACKSEAT DRIVER

When your epic night comes to an end, hit up Lyft for a safe ride from a professional designated driver. lyft.com



ON-WHITE MASTERPIECE

Club night starts and ends with what's on your feet. Think simple, smooth and luxe with the perfect pair of white sneakers. These, from Common Projects, will up your game whether you pair them with a suit or denim. commonprojects.com



EFFEN VODKA GRAPEFRUIT BUBBLY

1.5 parts EFFEN Vodka
1 part grapefruit juice
1 part prosecco

Pour all ingredients into a champagne flute.
Garnish with a lemon twist.



EFFEN BLACK CHERRY VODKA VODKA BEAST

1.5 parts EFFEN Black Cherry Vodka
.5 part vanilla simple syrup
2 parts white cranberry juice
.5 part fresh lemon juice

Shake and strain all ingredients over fresh ice in a rocks glass. Garnish with brandied cherries.

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TECH

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT



AUTO



SO WHAT EXACTLY DO I GET FOR MY \$400,000?

The impressive numbers behind the insanely expensive McLaren 675LT

As you hammer down on the throttle of the 2016 McLaren 675LT, it takes a split second to realize this breathtaking piece of machinery is engineered to completely rattle the laws of science.

The performance numbers for our Napier green \$400,000 test model alone are enough to dazzle a car lover. Take, for starters, the street-legal 675LT's zero-to-60-mph time of 2.8 seconds. With a curb weight of 2,712 pounds—still one of the lightest cars in its class—the McLaren is practically as quick as Ducati's flagship 1299 Panigale, a 367-pound superbike rated as one of the fastest in the world. And given the 675LT's quarter-mile time, the sleek, low-profile racer is capable of covering the length of a football field (end zone to end zone)

in a mind-blowing 1.72 seconds at 142 mph.

Not to mention that—in a dream world where supercars aren't subject to speed restrictions—the McLaren could travel the 281 miles from Detroit to Chicago in a little over an hour at its top speed of 205 mph. The first car in nearly two decades to wear the racing brand's iconic Longtail name, the 675LT owes most of its stunning qualities to the McLaren P1, from which it is derived.

Even the 675LT's combined fuel economy of 18 miles per gallon is a modern-day marvel of sorts, given that its 3.8-liter twin-turbocharged V8 has a peak output of 666 horsepower and 516 pound-feet. And with a power-to-weight ratio of four pounds per hp, the car weighs about the

same as a 2016 Honda Civic—but has almost four times the horsepower.

Insane, right? And yet the numbers don't even begin to capture the rush you feel behind the wheel while strapped into the carbon-fiber-shelled bucket seats of the McLaren 675LT. Every element of the seven-speed dual-clutch-equipped supercar is engineered to boggle the mind as a road car, from the Formula One-style front-end plates to a new tech feature called "ignition cut" that facilitates lightning-fast shifts.

Only 500 units of the McLaren 675LT were manufactured, which leads us to one final digit: the number that remain unsold. And that would be zero.—*Marcus Amick*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE PARFET

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MY WAY

TANNER FOUST

The rallycross champ, Top Gear host, stunt driver and world-record holder has done his share of drifting, both on and off the track

AS TOLD TO **SEAN MANNING**

My dad had this yellow Porsche 912. It had sheepskin seat covers and camel leather inside. He bought it when I was three years old, right when my folks got divorced. I would spend the summers in Denver at his house. I remember when I was about five years old, my dad was turning right—I literally can smell the car thinking about this—from Colorado Boulevard onto Hampden Avenue. It was probably a second-gear corner, and he got after it a little bit, and the tires squealed. I'd never heard that before. I'd never *felt* that before. I was just hooked on cars from that day on. I was the annoying one who called out the type of car by its headlights. By the time I was 10 I could fully drive a stick.

In college at the University of Colorado, I ended up doing a pre-med major called environmental, population and organismic biology—which was really hard to say without saying “orgasm.” In the meantime, I worked for this guy named Bill Kitchen. He invented amusement-park rides. It was the first time I thought about making a living doing something fun rather than having a job and a hobby. I worked for Bill for my last three years of school and a little while after that. He moved his company to Florida. After graduation, I went and worked in Orlando for three or four months, but I missed the mountains. I flew back to Colorado, not really having much of a plan. On the plane I was thinking, What the hell am I going to do? I

got good grades and put in all this effort. There were a lot of questions from my family. What's next, med school? I'd done everything because everybody told me to, but now I had no clue what I really wanted to do. I just happened to be sitting next to the window. When we were landing, I looked out and saw Second Creek Raceway. I drove there straight from the airport.

When I got there, this guy told me to step away from the track. His name was Rich Dahl. He had a team of club racers, so I volunteered for his team. I was a terrible mechanic. But from my time working for Bill, I was good at business and organization. I helped Rich do stuff on his computer, put stuff into Excel spreadsheets. I worked for him for eight months. Out of that I got enough driving time to get my license and eventually do one race.

Whatever skills you have, even if your only skill is *Minecraft*, just get into that industry. If you maintain interest and are thinking about it as soon as you wake up and thinking about it as you go to sleep, then you'll get good. And if you start from the bottom up, you'll be well-rounded. You'll have some foundation in the business and some security.

At about the five-year mark, I heard from the family, “Well, I guess you're going to stick with this.” And you know what? Now I own that exact Porsche my dad drove me around in. I bought it from him. I probably paid a little over the Blue Book value. He knew he had me. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGDALENA WOSINSKA

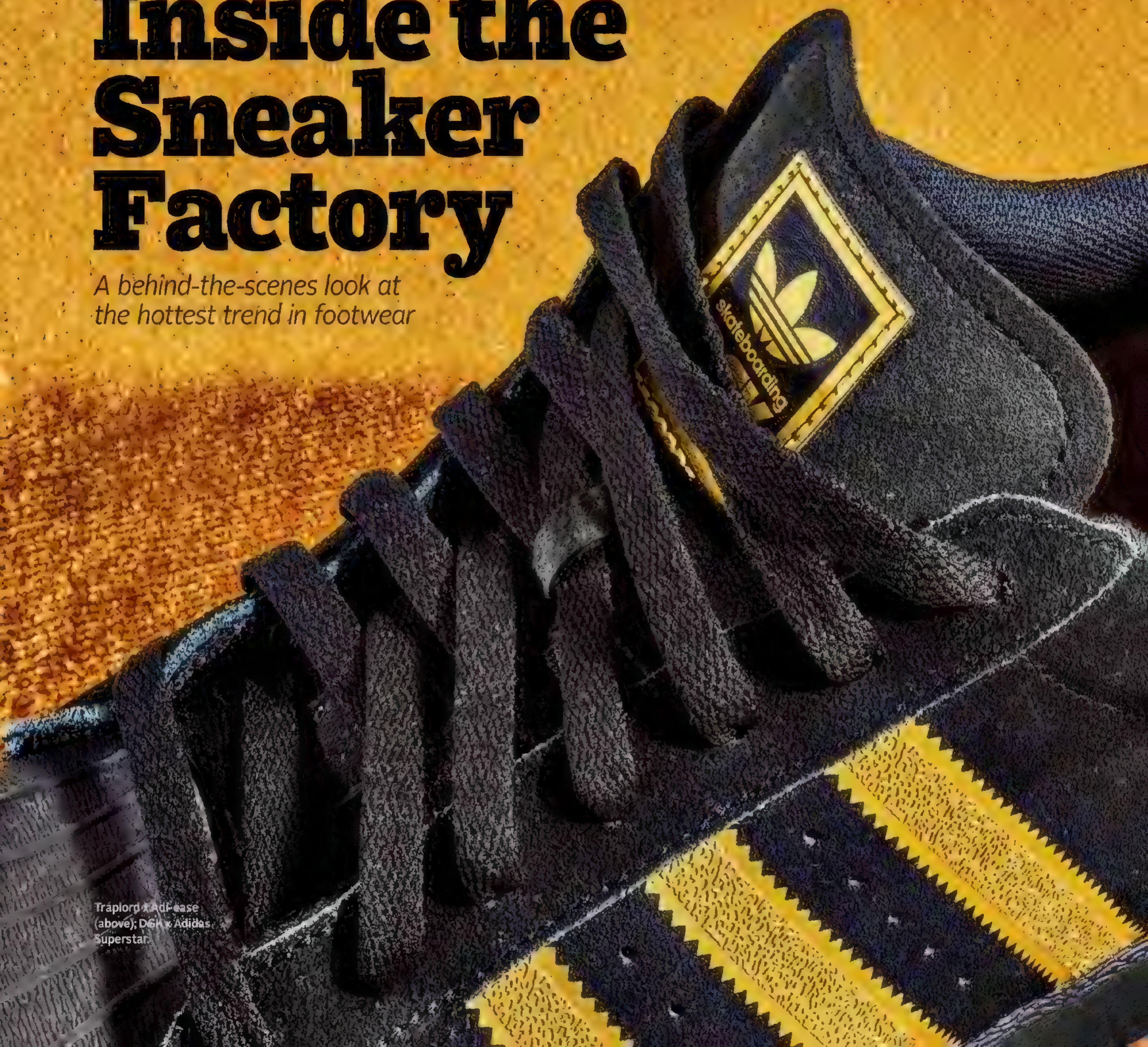


**I WAS THE
ANNOYING ONE
WHO CALLED
OUT THE TYPE
OF CAR BY ITS
HEADLIGHTS.**



Inside the Sneaker Factory

A behind-the-scenes look at the hottest trend in footwear



Traplord x Ad-ease
(above); DGM x Adidas
Superstar



STYLE

One of the eminently fascinating if over-exploited trends in contemporary consumer culture is the fashion collaboration, in which Brand A (usually a very big company with deep pockets and distribution) joins forces with Brand B (usually a very cool company or person with major cultural cred) to create something that brings the best of both partners together in one product. This, in theory, results in something unique and introduces each brand to a

new audience. Sometimes it makes sense, as in the case of the LeBron James Nike line of footwear and clothing. Sometimes it's intentionally absurd, as in the case of the Supreme partnership with Kidde fire extinguishers. Shoes are the most visible example: Kanye West's Yeezy line, with partners including Nike and Adidas, has yielded styles that top \$93,000 on the resale market. One of the earliest and most famous footwear collaborations is the Adidas

Stan Smith effort, which in 1971 paired the then leading men's tennis player with the then fledgling German footwear company. Last year's Pharrell Williams Billionaire Boys Club pony-hair Adidas Stan Smiths (that's four, count 'em, four brands) is a head-spinning quad-collab. We spoke with Adidas senior project manager Jimmy Manley for a look at how Adidas collaborates with athletes and artists to create new product lines that punch through the noise.

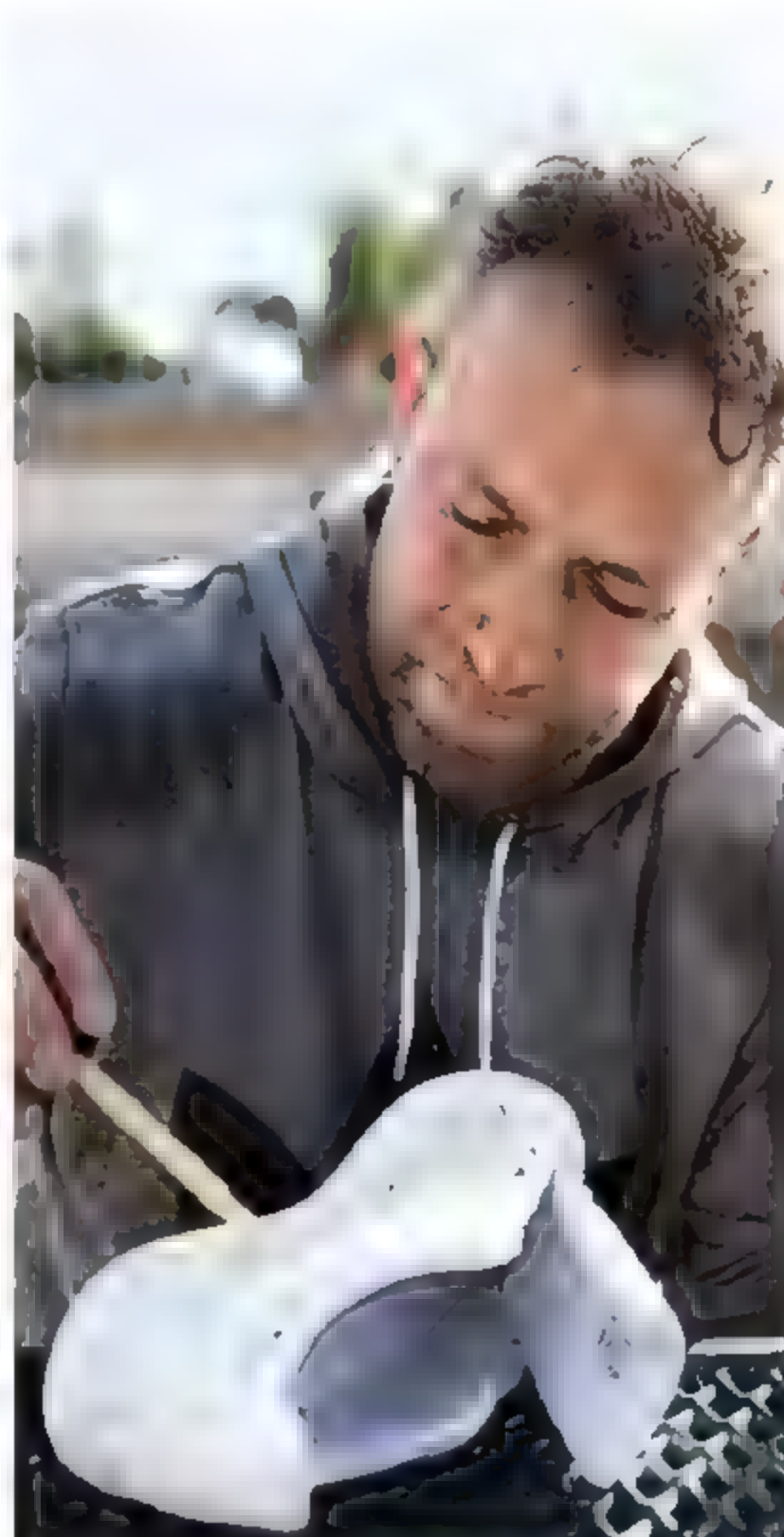
ANATOMY OF A COLLABORATION

The not-so-straight path Adidas collaborations take from idea to sale



THE INSPIRATION

As skate style goes mainstream, Adidas, as well as other brands, retains its cred by sponsoring pro athletes. Skating legend Dennis Busenitz (pictured above) worked with Adidas on its first pro skate line, which recently released an apparel and footwear collaboration with rapper A\$AP Ferg.



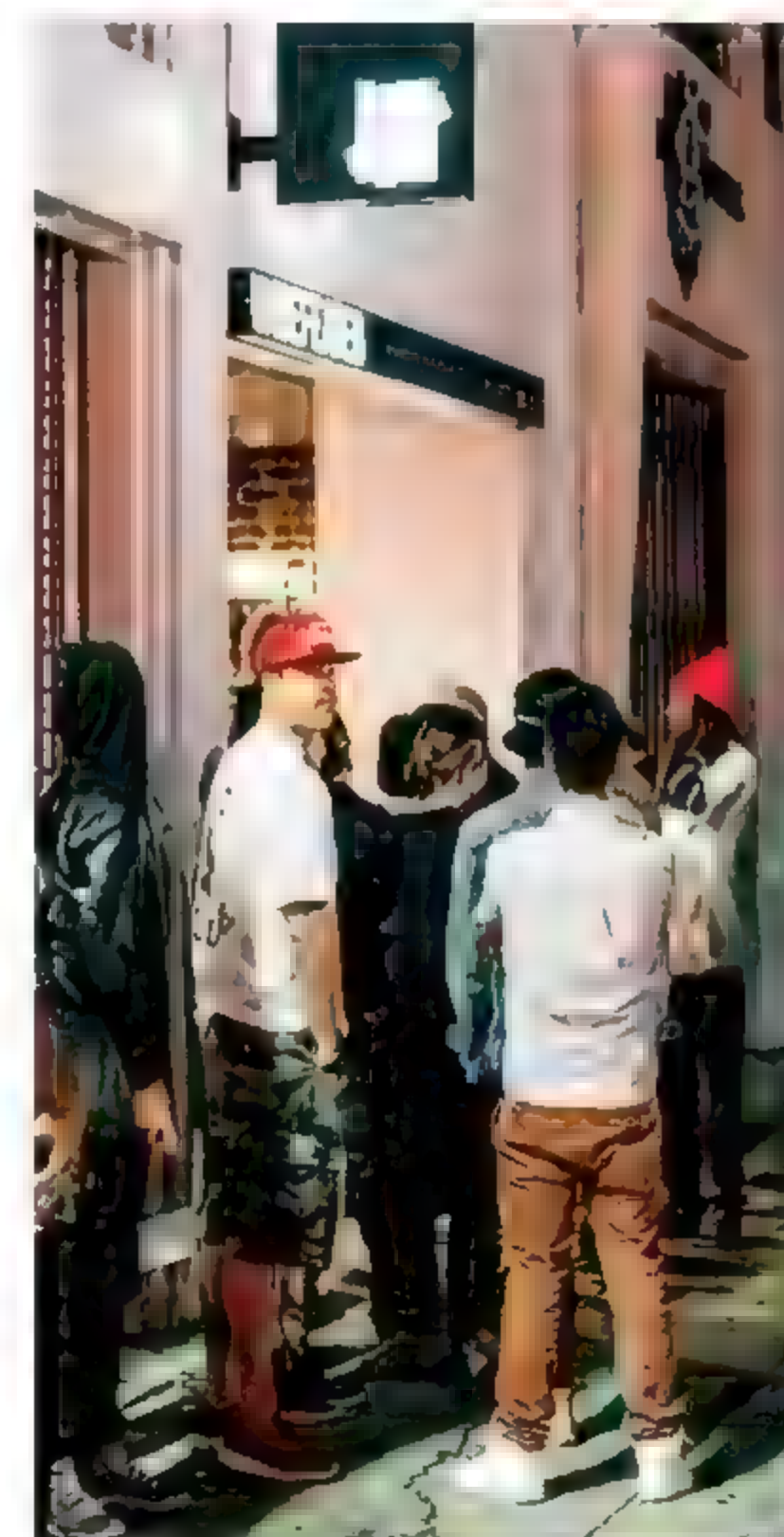
THE PROCESS

Skater and artist Mark Gonzales (above) gave both function and form to his numerous collabs with Adidas. Of A\$AP Ferg's Traplord x Adi-ease edition (opposite page, top), Jimmy Manley says, "Ferg's music literally made its way onto the product" in the handwritten lyrics on the laces.



THE BUZZ

Before ASAP Ferg (above) released his Traplord line, it became known the collection was an homage to deceased bandmate ASAP Yams, which helped propel early interest. Manley says, "At some point Ferg shared that he went to art school, and that's where the idea of him doing a Yams painting came from."



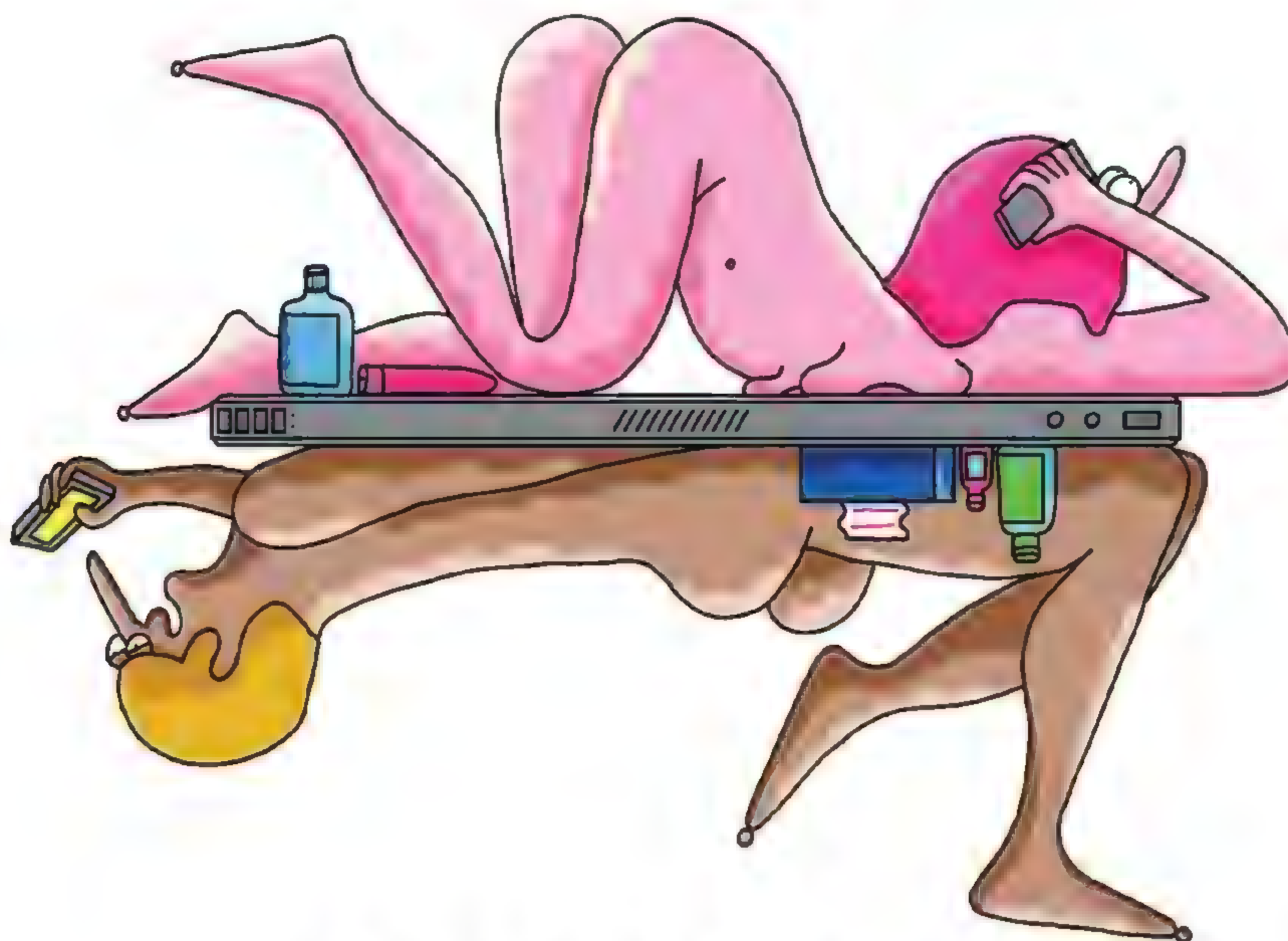
THE DROP

To see the debut of Ferg's collection, you had to attend Art Basel Miami, where the A\$AP Yams painting was displayed. Resellers line up overnight on highly anticipated drop days. If that's too much of a hassle, play collaborator yourself and customize your own Superstars online.

PHOTOGRAPHY AT LEFT BY GRANT CORNETT



ADVISOR



I THINK I'M ADDICTED TO PHONE SEX. *Is That Such a Bad Thing?*

Q: *I'm a 25-year-old guy in a chill and loving seven-month relationship. However, I can't stop calling phone-sex lines. Who has phone sex in 2016? Let me explain: I first came across a pop-up ad for a phone-sex site while watching a cam-girl show a few years ago. I signed up and was hooked immediately. Sure, webcams are fine, but they leave nothing to the imagination. When I started dating my girlfriend, we were inseparable. Then things became routine, and now I look for excuses so I can avoid sleeping at her place; I just want to go home and get back on the phone. It irritates my girlfriend that I don't want to stay over, but I see no reason to quit my habit. What should I do?*

BY **RACHEL RABBIT WHITE**

A: First, let me delight in your fetish. Oh, phone sex. That gentle rhythm of whispers and obscenities. Those indecipherable, breathy questions that, only partially comprehended, could be answered with a moan. The

easy role-play that comes when you don't have to look each other in the eye. Oh, how I miss phone sex. When I was a teenager, AOL instant messaging made for awkward "cybersex," though of course we attempted it. "R u fingering yourself?" some stranger would type. "Ya. Feels good," I'd type back, sitting on the swivel chair fully clothed, my hands resting on the keyboard. But back then, the phone was my medium. I must

have spent half my teen years beneath the duvet, breathing into a cordless phone, asking boys from neighboring high schools to be more specific: What was it about me that was hot? What was it, exactly, that they would do to me if they were there? Right. Now.

Phone sex may not be the most popular masturbation aid, but it's not so bizarre. One of my dearest and most beautiful friends works at a phone-sex site. I asked her about your question. "In my experience, there are two types of guys who call," she says. "Those who do it for kicks and those who think it's 'going somewhere.' I'm constantly pressured

by the latter to meet in person, provide my address, etc. I have to explain that this is a fantasy and that they have to respect the boundaries of the fictional relationship. Virtual sex can be a blast—if kept virtual. Guys should never feel guilty about it."

The real problem is when your virtual sex life cuts into your real sex life. What are the chances your girlfriend will break up with you if your intimacy continues to decline, and would you be okay with that? How will nightly phone-sex sessions affect your daily life? Perhaps you're more interested in exploring extremes—in intensity, in approaching edges, in your limits. It's clear you're someone who is searching and asking questions. And I can't blame you for that. But real sex is pretty spectacular too.

My phone-sex operator friend adds: "If he isn't having sex with his girlfriend, that's indicative of a problem. He should talk to her and work on the issue, because obviously he could lose her. Maybe unconsciously that's what he wants; in that case, tell him to call me."

Questions? E-mail advisor@playboy.com.

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE PERRY

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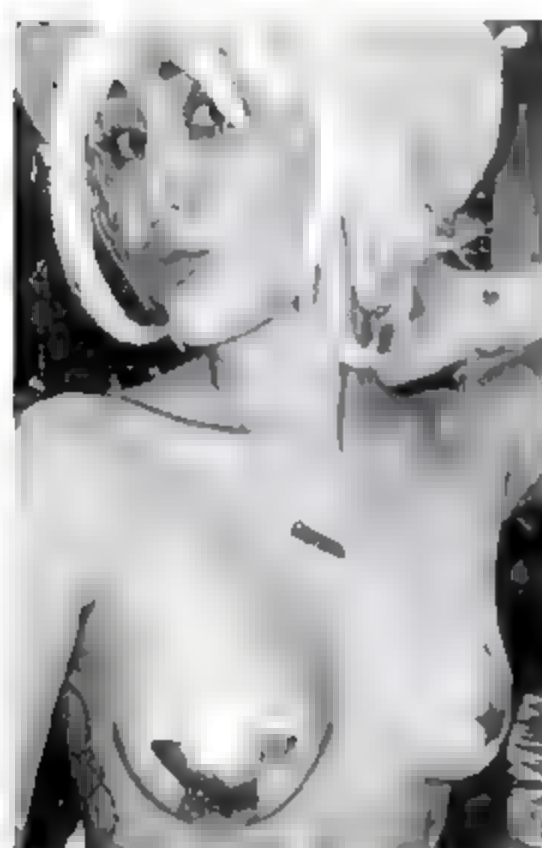


THE RABBIT HOLE

ON NUDITY

BY BEN SCHOTT

—INSTAGRA/M/AMMARIES—



Although Instagram acknowledges that “people might want to share nude images,” the company prohibits shots of “sexual intercourse, genitals and close-ups of fully nude buttocks.” Female nipples are banned unless they depict “postmastectomy scarring” or breast-feeding. (Nudity in photos of paintings and sculptures is fine.) A host of celebs have run afoul of this code, including Rihanna, Chrissy Teigen and, inevitably, Miley Cyrus (pictured). Chelsea Handler asked, “If a man posts a photo of his nipples, it’s okay, but not a woman? Are we in 1825?”

—MEDIEVAL NUDITY—

For medieval theologians, nudity could be categorized into the following four symbolic types:

NUDITAS NATURALIS

The animal condition of human nakedness.

NUDITAS TEMPORALIS

A metaphorical nakedness of poverty.

NUDITAS VIRTUALIS

The nakedness of Adam and Eve in Eden.

NUDITAS CRIMINALIS

The vain, lustful nakedness of the sinner.

—NUDE DREAMS—

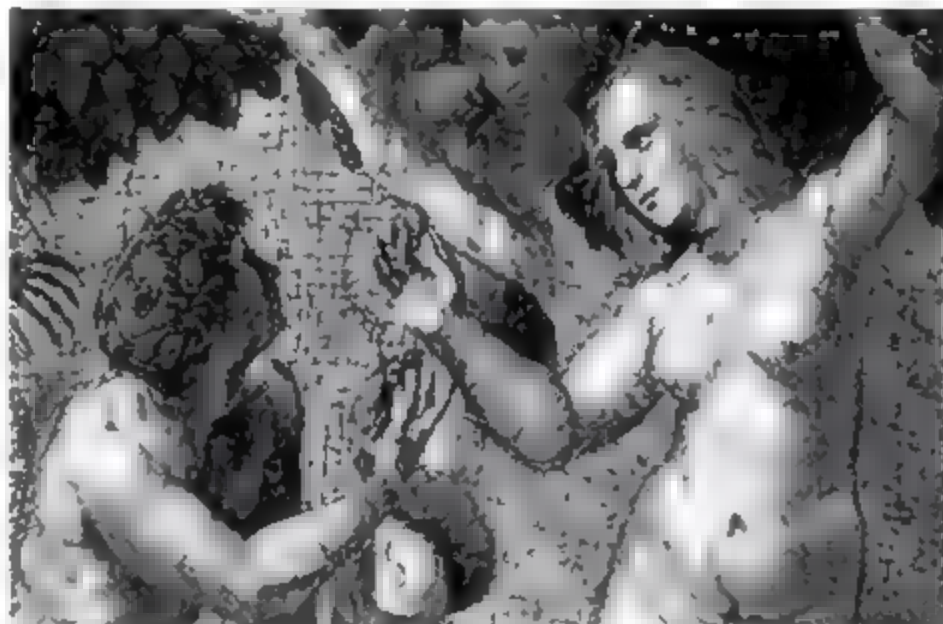
Sigmund Freud suggested that the “great majority” of us have dreams in which we are naked in public, but he observed that while the dreamer feels deeply embarrassed, the imagined onlookers usually remain perfectly indifferent. (Incidentally, a 2012 survey found that only eight percent of Americans sleep naked.)

“You don’t have to be naked to be sexy.”

—NICOLE KIDMAN

—MISCELLANUDE—

The G-string and the thong both became popular during the 1939 World’s Fair, when New York’s diminutive mayor Fiorello La Guardia insisted the city’s nude dancers cover up. ♣ In 1973, during PBS’s broadcast of *Steambath*, TV viewers discovered for the very first time what naked women look like. ♣ The winter 2015 edition of *V* magazine features five female nipples, two of which belong to Miley Cyrus, who also hints at the runway of her Brazilian. ♣ Despite its title and premise, the 1997 movie *The Full Monty* fails to show full-frontal nudity.



♣ Director James Cameron insisted the female Na’vi in *Avatar* have breasts, even though they aren’t placental mammals and therefore don’t breast-feed. His justification: “Because this is a movie for human people!” (Incidentally, artists have long debated whether belly buttons should be depicted on Adam and Eve, since they are God’s creation.) ♣ The essayist William Hazlitt gave three reasons why burglars should operate *in cuerpo*—that is, naked: (1) it is cool and airy, (2) it speeds escape and (3) “Dogs are alarmed at the sight of naked men.” ♣ The Ponte delle Tette (“Bridge of Tits”) in Venice is so named because Renaissance-era prostitutes used it as a “shop window,” baring their breasts to entice potential clients in gondolas below. ♣ Clark Gable is credited with freeing the male nipple when, in the 1934 film *It Happened One Night*, he disrobes to reveal his torso: Sales of men’s undershirts collapsed.

—SOME LIKE IT HOT—



In 1960, Marilyn Monroe told *Marie Claire* that her claim of wearing to bed only a few drops of perfume was born of modesty: “You know they ask you questions.... Just an example: ‘What do you wear to bed? Do you wear a pajama top, the bottoms of the pajamas or a nightgown?’ So I said, ‘Chanel No. 5!’ Because it’s the truth! And yet I don’t want to say ‘nude,’ you know? But it’s the truth.” Two years later, Marilyn was found dead, in the nude, as immortalized in the song “Candle in the Wind.”

—NIP-SLIP GLOSSARY—

The deeply creepy book *Mr. Skin’s Skincyclopedia* is subtitled *The A-to-Z Guide to Finding Your Favorite Actresses Naked*. So if you urgently need to see, say, Susan Sarandon unclad, *Mr. Skin* lists 14 movies to watch. Pedantically, the book defines its own coding system for nudity:

BREASTS *both bouncers visible in one shot*
BUNS *butt crack*
BUSH *pubic region, however hairy (or not)*
FFN *both breasts and bush visible in one shot*
NIP SLIP *momentary, usually accidental incident of a milk-spout spilling into view*
NIP SLIP LB *left nip slip*
NIP SLIP RB *right nip slip*
LB *left breast*
RB *right breast*
THONG *butt cheeks visible, but(t) crack is concealed by flosslike undergarment*

Calamitous “wardrobe malfunctions” befall celebrities with such regularity a cynic may wonder just how accidental nip slips really are.

AS NAKED AS: Adam & Eve • death • a flea • a frog • the Graces • a jaybird • a nail • night • a Norfolk dumpling • a peeled apple • the sea • a ship’s figurehead • the vulgar air • the winter earth • a worm
EUPHEMISMS: in the buff • wearing your birthday suit • starkers • stitchless • skyclad • in a state of nature • bare-assed • in Adam’s dress • Adamite • denuded • like the emperor • in puris naturalibus

BROAD CITY

Abbi Jacobson and Ilana Glazer don't know if they're successful yet, but they do know how to explain pegging to your mom

Q1: *Broad City* is in its third season. The show is critically acclaimed and has a fiercely loyal and devoted audience. But do you feel successful?

ILANA GLAZER: I don't know. It feels good. It feels like we're doing okay. But have you "made it" if you don't own a washer-dryer?

ABBI JACOBSON: This is a topic of conversation we have all the time, because neither of us has a washer-dryer.

Q2: *You seriously discuss how neither of you are able to do laundry in your own homes?*

GLAZER: All the time. We were talking about that this morning.

JACOBSON: Just a couple of hours ago, actually. Ilana said to me that she doesn't have a washer-dryer, and that seems weird.

GLAZER: It would be weirder to have one.

JACOBSON: It would. But why does having a washer-dryer seem way beyond insane?

GLAZER: I think it would be life-changing. It would be huge.

Q3: *Your characters on Broad City are pretty poor, yet they live in New York City. Is that still possible?*

JACOBSON: I don't know if they're actually poor—I mean, at least compared with actual poor people.

GLAZER: Their parents help out.

JACOBSON: They come from middle- or upper-class families, and they're living in the city right up against these überwealthy people. So they end up with these day jobs they might not necessarily care about.

GLAZER: You can survive in New York without much, if you're careful. You have to make your own food at home and not buy a lot of clothes.

JACOBSON: Having a bicycle helps.





BY
ERIC SPITZNAGEL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TURE LILLEGRAVEN

Q4: A lot of female comedians, including Amy Schumer and both of you, have been accused of "sneaky" feminism. The Wall Street Journal explicitly described *Broad City* as "sneak attack feminism." Why are you so sneaky?

JACOBSON: We're both totally up-front and proud feminists. We're not being all secretive about it. I feel we're pretty blatant in our approach.

GLAZER: I think it's kind of crazy that we're still calling comedians "female comedians." That seems more like a sneak attack.

JACOBSON: I mean, sure, if you play the episodes of *Broad City* backward, there are hidden messages.

GLAZER: "Diiiie, men." If you play any *Broad City* episode backward, that's all we're saying.

Q5: *Broad City* has been compared to Lena Dunham's HBO series *Girls*. Both are about white upper-middle-class women who live in New York City and have lots of sex. How are the two shows different?

GLAZER: If somebody asks, I usually just tell them to google it.

JACOBSON: Or watch it and see if they're different. Do your own homework.

GLAZER: It's so weird that that's a thing. Like, "You tell me why I'm going to watch these two shows about talking and walking vaginas."

JACOBSON: Who has time for that?

GLAZER: You've got the one show about some vaginas.

JACOBSON: And then there's that other show with the other talking and walking vaginas.

GLAZER: I'm not going to watch two TV shows with vaginas in them unless somebody tells me why they're different!

Q6: Hillary Clinton is a guest on your show this season. Is the U.S. about to elect its first female president?

JACOBSON: I think we are, hopefully with Bernie Sanders in the Cabinet.

GLAZER: Bernie as vice president?

JACOBSON: That would make for a delicious world, right?

GLAZER: We're big Hillary supporters, for a lot of reasons.

JACOBSON: I really like Hillary's women's rights agenda. I like her thoughts on the environment and what we do with trash and how we dispose of it and what we make shit out of. And stuff relating to trees and the earth and animals and shit, like food production. And climate change. Obviously there's a huge problem going on.

GLAZER: Yeah, climate change is huge.

JACOBSON: Shit is getting dire.

Q7: You two should be writing campaign slogans for her. "Hillary Clinton in '16: Shit Is Getting Dire."

JACOBSON: Right? And that's because it's true. Shit is getting dire, and it's not enough to just talk about it. You have to do something toward changing things.

GLAZER: Which Hillary will.

JACOBSON: We need somebody to stand up and say, "It's all about climate issues and shit" and then do something about that shit!

Q8: Your characters on *Broad City* will do almost anything for each other, including be each other's doo-doo ninjas. Is that a lesson in what true female friendships should look like?

GLAZER: That's not a lesson in female friendships but rather in ride-or-die friendships.

JACOBSON: Exactly. It's exciting to write characters who love each other and fight for each other.

GLAZER: There's this belief with no merit that media with women at the center applies only to women, but media with men at the center applies to everyone. Abbi and Ilana's friendship represents that ride-or-die dynamic for anyone to whom it speaks, not just women.

Q9: How well do you know each other? Tell us something about the other that she doesn't know you know.

GLAZER: Okay, here's something. The other day, Abbi knew I was wearing a new shirt.

JACOBSON: Yep, that's true.

GLAZER: She just knew. I didn't have to tell her. That's when you know you know somebody: when you know every piece of clothing they have in their wardrobe. That's friendship.

Q10: Ilana, your bras have become almost mythical; the strappy one has its own Reddit forum. Are they from your own wardrobe, or do you have a whole think tank devoted to creating aesthetically complicated bras?

GLAZER: Our costume designer, Staci Greenbaum, really had her finger on the pulse with that bra, as well as our shopper, Catharine Stuart, who's out on the fashion streets doing the purchasing. I call it the goddess bra because it's pseudo Grecian goddess. I feel like there was a BDSM thing going on in fashion recently, with leather harnesses and bodices, and this goddess-bra trend is like the sweat-pants version of the harness. That style has been popping up everywhere. I don't totally get the mythical part; that may just be what's filling the bra. My boobs. And Abbi's butt. Very powerful.

Q11: We've also heard that you're more uncomfortable with the kissing scenes than the nude scenes. Please explain.

GLAZER: It just feels more intimate somehow. You meet this person, then your mouth is on their mouth, and the whole thing is being choreographed by your friend, and 70 people are on the set watching you do it. It feels weird. It feels abrupt. It isn't natural. It's a contrived thing. You're not usually making out in front of 70 people. The nude thing, I don't know. It's sillier somehow. It's more like physical comedy. But kissing someone, it feels invasive to have everybody watching me.

Q12: You've brought pegging into the mainstream. Before you used it as a comedic device on *Broad City*, did you know what pegging was?

JACOBSON: Oh sure. We do our homework.

GLAZER: We're very knowledgeable. And in order to write the episode, we kind of required the entire production staff to experience it—the writers, actors, producers, people at the network.

JACOBSON: Right down to the lighting people. And the grip. He was essential.

GLAZER: We're all about authenticity. I hope you didn't get from that episode that we think pegging is weird. We think it's the opposite.

“YOU TELL ME WHY I’M GOING TO WATCH THESE SHOWS ABOUT TALKING AND WALKING VAGINAS.”



JACOBSON: I think it's hot. I'm glad I did it for the show.

Q13: Not everybody knows what we're talking about. Could you help us explain to, let's say, our mothers—in the most delicate, inoffensive way possible—what we mean by pegging?

GLAZER: Sure. Just tell her pegging is when a woman wears a strap-on with a very hard dildo and then puts it into a guy's butt, with lubricant and foreplay. Wait, why are you having to explain this?

JACOBSON: Does your mother not watch *Broad City*?

GLAZER: There's something wrong with your mom.

Q14: Do your parents watch the show, or just the parts you've preapproved for them?

JACOBSON: They watch everything; we'll just warn them in advance about some of it—"Next week is going to be a big one," or whatever. But they sit through every episode anyway, even

when it gets explicit. And they should.

GLAZER: Some things are a little more risqué than others, but I think they understand where it's coming from.

JACOBSON: *Broad City* has a wild side, but it also has a heartfelt side. It's very human. I think that's something both our parents are very proud of.

Q15: Even the drugs?

GLAZER: Sure. I vape with my parents in the house. My parents don't really get high, which bums me out, but I vape with them around. It's just like a glass of wine. The family of the future is parents and kids who get high together. That's crazy to me, but it's so cool. I like the fact that my parents are fine with it, even if they won't do it with me.

Q16: When fans meet you, do they want your autograph or do they want to get stoned with you?

JACOBSON: They mostly want to smoke—that more than the autograph.

GLAZER: I never want to do it. It's not a

fun high. I'm just nervous and hyper-aware. But I like it when people just give us weed. That's fucking awesome.

JACOBSON: When we were on tour, a lot of people just dropped joints on the merch table for us. That was great. Every time, I was like, "Thank you so much."

GLAZER: It's a true donor spirit.

JACOBSON: There was this one lady in Colorado who made us something ceramic; it could have been either a ring holder or a bowl cleaner. She was just like, "Here you go." And we were both like, "Oh my God! Thank yooooou!"

Q17: Ilana, weren't you in an antidrug club in high school?

GLAZER: I was, yes! [laughs] You got to miss class to do it; like, many periods of school. And then they took us to an elementary or middle school, and we told kids they could be cool when they grew up even if they didn't do drugs.

JACOBSON: You didn't start smoking?

GLAZER: No.

JACOBSON: It just seems like it would've been a great opportunity. You get out of school; you're hanging out.

GLAZER: Yeah. What did I do with that extra time?

JACOBSON: Why skip school if you're not going to smoke?

GLAZER: Exactly. But I didn't start smoking weed till my junior year. I had a boyfriend who smoked a lot, and I was like, Oh, I guess I'm moving on to this phase of life. *[laughs]* I didn't fight it at all.

Q18: You've done some amazing things with Twitter, from pestering Whole Foods into letting you shoot at one of its stores to almost getting Diane Keaton to be a guest star on *Broad City*. Does it work both ways? Could fans Tweet-beg you into dating them or hosting their bar mitzvah?

GLAZER: I would love to host someone's bar mitzvah. I would love to do that.

JACOBSON: I wonder how much we could get paid for that. It would have to be some Los Angeles Jewish dad paying for it, right?

Q19: Here's a dilemma. You have \$100 to spend in Bed Bath & Beyond. What do you buy, and do you use coupons?

JACOBSON: We have \$100 to spend? Okay, let's think about this rationally. I need some hangers.

GLAZER: You should get the velvet ones.

JACOBSON: Yes, some velvet hangers. I need some trash bags. I need.... What do I need? Ilana doesn't have a teakettle. We would get you a top-of-the-line teakettle.

Q20: Why do we have a weird feeling we could leave the room right now and come back in an hour and the two of you would still be talking about this?

JACOBSON: Could you stop with the questions for a minute? We're trying to figure this out.

GLAZER: I would get a heating pad. I gave my heating pad away and I would really love one. The last time I was in Bed Bath & Beyond, I was with you, actually. We got you a lot of candles. Was it a dozen?

JACOBSON: *[Laughs]* I do need a dozen candles.

GLAZER: I don't like their candles. I just don't like the glass candleholders. It's like wasting all this glass.

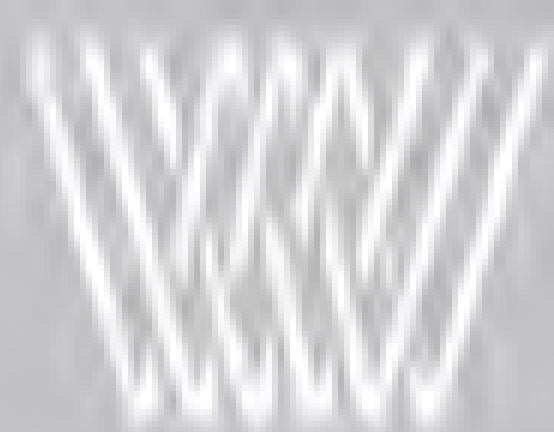
JACOBSON: But then you have all these candle containers. You can reuse them.

GLAZER: I don't know. I'm not convinced. ■





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FILM

Reinventing Lex

In his first outing as a blockbuster villain, **JESSE EISENBERG** has us rooting for the bad guy

*Lex Luthor is bald, except when he has a wild mop of red hair. He's a stone-faced Kevin Spacey, except when he's an ascot-sporting Gene Hackman. And he's a sociopath bent on world destruction, except when he's a deep soul who questions his own powers. In short, Superman's archnemesis is a complicated man. Who better to play him in 2016 than Jesse Eisenberg, who slides from one difficult role to the next: In the past year, he's grieved a lost parent in *Louder Than Bombs* and sparred with David Foster Wallace in *The End of the Tour*. But *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* marks his first straight-up villain role. We asked about the part's complexities, and he told us about mocking co-stars Ben Affleck and Henry Cavill on camera.—Stephen Rebell*

On Luthor's crooked moral compass:

"The character is a more modern, psychologically realistic concept of Lex Luthor. He has a way of using language that's specific to the way his mind works. He struggles with interesting philosophical dilemmas, such as that of the individual having too much power, even if that individual is using that power for good. Superman has so far been using his powers to do good, but is it safe to have someone like that walking the streets?"

On inhabiting the role:

"He reminds me of one of those characters in old Greek theater who explicitly state the philosophical dilemma at hand in a way that feels in line with that character's interests and voice. This is the kind of role actors really like to play, because you don't feel it's a problem if you color outside the lines. I can be as funny as I want, and I can be as sad as I want, because the character's also going through real internal conflict."

On the long Luthor lineage:

"The previous movies are interesting to watch, but they feel unrelated. This incarnation of the character is drawn so differently. I'd read the comic books, but I figured out pretty quickly there's not much there that relates to an acting role; it's just a different format. You know the old joke about actors—if you're playing the messenger, you think it's a play about the messenger—but the main characters are wonderful as well."

On working with Cavill and Affleck:

"They're both very smart, funny people. We were all sort of adjusting things to make the scenes as good as they could be. Henry already played Superman in another movie, so he had a strong idea of his character. That was fun for me because I could play with that. It was also strange, because I have a lot of respect for both of them, yet my character mocks them a lot. But that was just the nature of the thing."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAKE CHESSUM



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TV

Your TV Hates Tech— *and You Secretly Do Too*

Why are our beloved devices all but absent from the most popular shows on cable?

From the smartphones that hotline-bling in our back pockets to the laptops aglow with Facebook updates, technology takes up every corner of our lives. How are we supposed to Netflix and chill with so many other screens vying for our attention?

Maybe that's why our favorite TV shows tend to steer clear of such modern trappings. We love watching people do things we ourselves wouldn't. (See: building a drug empire, fighting dragons, living without Facebook.) From the recently departed *Mad Men* and *Downton Abbey* to the wildly popular *Game of Thrones* and *The Walking Dead*, TV shows devoid of Twitter, Tinder and Taylor Swift videos have a strange allure.

Look at *Mad Men*, which takes place in a world where driving a lawn mower is exciting and computers are so new and scary that they drive a character to cut off one of his nipples. Watching sexy people misbehave, without the shackles of a spouse checking in via text, is damn near irresistible. A modern-day Don Draper would most likely be some potbellied guy who spends his nights browsing Ashley Madison and dodging WhatsApp messages from his second wife.

Downton Abbey offers a similar reprieve, albeit without Jon Hamm's immaculate chest hair. The *Abbey* set is far too busy worrying about sinking ocean liners, Spanish influenza and deathbed marriages to consider fantasy-baseball stats or Missy Elliott's first music video in seven years. And the poor Earl of Grantham could have saved his family from ruin if he'd only had an app to organize his finances, but what fun would that be?

Of particular note is *The Walking Dead*, which presents an intriguing premise: not its zombie apocalypse, a plot we've been mining since the 1960s, but its placement in a time that looks a lot like ours except for its total lack of devices. Its characters, former iPhone junkies just like us, have to learn to live off the grid. (Also, with zombies.) They could avoid so many deaths and inexplicable resurrections if they had Facebook, Twitter or Yelp, where the survivors could post status updates or review weapons. More than the breakdown of modern society, it's the show's underlying question—*Is it better to have tweeted and lost than never to have tweeted at all?*—that keeps us coming back.

The absence of tech in shows isn't just a fantasy for viewers; it's an important logistical workaround for storytellers too. As myriad writers and directors know, the unlimited amount of knowledge at our fingertips eliminates a lot of the fruitful problems you would normally find in fiction. The wrong-turn premise of the most basic plot line doesn't happen in the age of Google Maps. Even the smartest TV shows of recent history have had to rely on spotty signals or missing phones to throw more obstacles at their protagonists. (See: *The X-Files*, on which cell phones always crap out when it's convenient for the writers, or *The Sopranos*, on which one prominent character dies because he forgets his phone and doesn't receive the call warning him of approaching hit men.) *Broad City* memorably mocks our digital addiction in a season one episode: Abbi loses her phone in a club, spurring a frantic citywide search, because how are you

supposed to get laid without your phone? No, seriously—I don't know.

This brings up another explanation for TV's digital detox. The average American is conscious for 16 to 18 hours a day and spends 11 of those hours looking at some sort of screen. When we're gawking at the TV, we prefer shows that don't remind us of all the other screens we could be gawking at.

A notable exception is the USA Network newcomer *Mr. Robot*. It obliterates the tech-on-TV problem by aiming its focus squarely at technology and how we interact with it. It doesn't just give us tech-geek details—it revels in them. Every facet of its characters' lives is tethered to technology, every minute detail susceptible to the prying eyes of anyone with internet access. Data courses through the show's veins like so much blood rendered in ones and zeros.

It's a modern folie à deux, us and our technology. That we escape from media and technology by watching media on technology would make Camus laugh. There's something enticing about the prospect of an unplugged life: You don't want to permanently banish technology, because you love it, but its absence feels exotic. Through TV we can imagine ourselves donning luxurious furs and slaying white walkers; when the credits roll, we can jump online to post our outrage at the (supposed) death of our favorite character. But in the same way that the Glens and Jon Snows of the world will never really die, we'll never really leave technology behind. We can delve into the delirium of life without our devices, but we always, inevitably, return.—Greg Gwik

ILLUSTRATION BY NOMA BAR



TALK LIKE A CAVEMAN

Far Cry Primal will make you rethink language—if the saber-toothed tigers don't get you first

The cavemen are pissed off, their ragged blades swinging at your head. But what the hell are they saying? Language was French publisher Ubisoft's big challenge when, two years ago, it began work on the next game in its *Far Cry* series. For *Far Cry Primal* (PC, PS4, Xbox One), Ubisoft has created a Stone Age world full of cavemen who started the world's first wars. Yet the words used 12,000 years ago weren't apelike grunts and screams. Those hairy guys had a remarkably complex language—one no gamer alive today understands.

"We used Proto-Indo-European, the mother of all tongues," says game director Thomas Simon. It's downright weird to hear hulking protagonist Takkar speak with what consultant Andrew Byrd, a linguistics professor, calls "something like German" with some Middle English thrown in. Byrd created a distinct version of PIE for each of *Primal*'s three tribes. One version has 15 vowels.

"Communicating was actually more complex then," says lead story writer Kevin Shortt. *Far Cry* developers asked Byrd for a stripped-down language, says Shortt, "then went with the

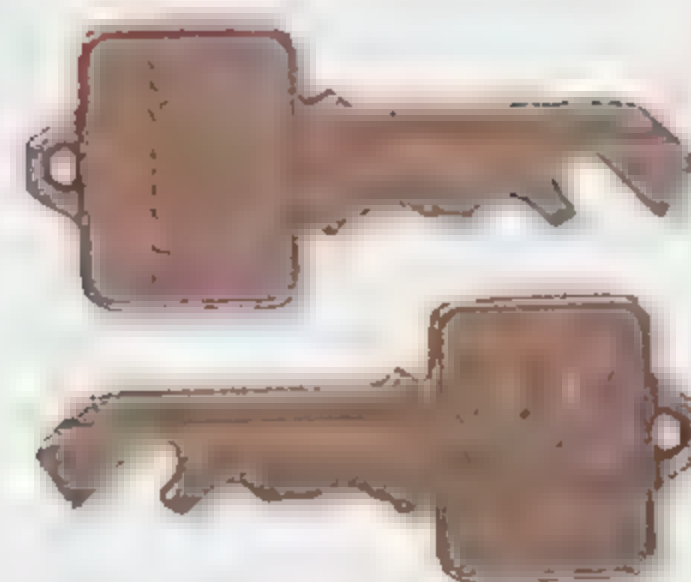
premise that actions speak louder than words." Players may even pick up the words for "bear" or "tiger" when characters shout them repeatedly.

The game makers also looked at films such as 1981's *Quest for Fire*, in which the gestures of the prehuman characters are so impassioned, evocative and witty, no language is needed. "We wanted our actors to emulate that," says Simon.

For three separate shoots last year, Byrd's wife, Brenna, also a professor and linguistics expert, flew to Toronto to teach *Primal*'s actors PIE "as if it were a real, current language." But when you're exploring alone, there's no language at all. Against a wash of ominous wind, the crack of a branch can herald a beast sneaking from behind to rip flesh from your bones.

"Humans used to be part of the food chain, not on top of it," explains Simon with a grin. "We wanted to reinforce the feeling that nature is full of terror." Yet through the savagery, as the strange, ancient tongue becomes ever more familiar, you learn that communication isn't just a means of survival; it's an essential key to evolution itself.—Harold Goldberg





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A Savage Journey

For fans, Savages shows had become religious experiences; Adore Life, the U.K. band's second album, is their New Testament

Savages hit a sharp turning point as they were finishing the tour in support of their 2013 debut, *Silence Yourself*. The London-based foursome realized that the frenzied reaction they were getting was atypical: The fans seemed to be having near-religious experiences. “There was a point where we couldn’t ignore it anymore, and we had to find a way to give back,” recalls frontwoman Jehnny Beth (above far left). “They didn’t just like the band; they really believed. And I think when you’re a musician, you can’t help but feel a certain responsibility from that.”

Their response was *Adore Life*, a haunting exercise in postpunk that doesn’t rewrite the genre’s rules so much as it stomps on them with steel-toed Dr. Martens. Listening to “The Answer,” the album’s first single, it’s easy to understand why people react so viscerally to the band, which also includes gui-

tarist Gemma Thompson, bassist Ayşe Hassan and drummer Fay Milton. While their first album saw the band creating ambitious art rock in the spirit of Gang of Four and Joy Division, *Adore Life* expands on their more abstract and chaotic moments, resulting in a sound that’s abrasive yet layered—and captivating throughout. “This record has a very personal attachment for some people,” Beth explains. “It allows them to start questioning things they had buried somewhere.”

Beth, who is originally from France, describes *Adore Life* as an “anxious record.” Indeed, psychic weight is palpable in everything from the hypnotic groove of “Sad Person” to the surprising vulnerability of “Mechanics.” “When we started the band, the idea of writing loud and fast music was a conscious rebellion against the London scene at the time,” Beth says about the formation of Savages in

2011. “You always set out to create the band you aren’t able to find, and it seemed like you needed a softer message and softer music in order to make it. We wanted to take a step away from that and see what happens.”

It should come as no surprise, then, that Beth has expectations for the album that go beyond viral marketing campaigns and Sound-Scan tabulations. She excitedly recounts a story about a fan who quit his job after being inspired by the aptly titled “Fuckers”—a song they wrote in the heat of that fervent response they were getting on tour.

“I think this record might help listeners introduce some sort of change; it’s one of the best things a record can do,” Beth says. At their core, Savages want to be that spark, igniting a fire that smolders long after the music fades out. “It would be a gift,” Beth says. “It would be a miracle almost.”—Jonah Bayer

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FRANCOFILE

The Wire creator **David Simon** talks about the birth of the sex industry, the failure of the drug war, the role of journalism and meeting President Obama

JAMES FRANCO: Your new HBO miniseries, *The Deuce*, is set in New York's old 42nd Street, when it was full of strip clubs, prostitutes and pimps. What attracted you to that world?

DAVID SIMON: We're trying to capture an extraordinary demimonde that sprang up in the middle of one of America's greatest cities. It had almost no precedent in terms of sheer glorious degeneracy. It was the Wild West. In a country that has always had puritan pretensions, it was a time when sex came rocketing out of the closet in every possible form. Pioneers in this new industry at that moment lived through extraordinary experiences, and in the end many of them paid extraordinary costs.

On one layer it's a beautiful critique of unrestrained capitalism, of the idea that you can put a price on anything and sell it. There's absolutely a market for sex; there always will be and there always has been. But if we give it free rein—and in some basic ways I think we have—what does that do to all of us?

FRANCO: So it's a look at what happens when capitalism meets sex?

SIMON: And what is the cost? What happens to the various forces involved? Where does the money go? What happens to labor? There's a lot we can say about what it means to live in a country where profit is exalted to the extent it is in America. There's a lot we can critique, and I find that really interesting. The sex industry has an undercurrent; regardless of how benignly somebody tries to approach it, there's a core value of misogyny—you know, the use and misuse of women. I'm interested in honestly and maybe even brutally exploring that, because I think we tend to treat the commodification of sex as some sort of comic by-product of our worst instincts. I'm not sure it's quite so funny.

FRANCO: You started your career as a newspaper reporter in Baltimore, and your first book became the award-winning TV series *Homicide: Life on the Streets*. Your next book, *The*



BY
JAMES FRANCO

Corner, was turned into a miniseries for HBO and paved the way for you to create *The Wire*. What did you want to capture about Baltimore?

SIMON: I remember thinking, If they give us this show, I don't want to do the same thing every year. I don't want to just introduce a few more interesting characters or a better villain. Jesus, put a gun in my mouth if I'm going to play that game. It occurred to me that if they were going to let me critique the drug war, which is what I wanted to do with the first season of *The Wire*, and explain why the entire city infrastructure had gotten lost in that dystopian policy, that the next season would have to explain the allure of drug culture in terms of the death of the working class. Every season I wanted to carve up another piece of the city and try to build a Baltimore that was a sociological critique of where we find ourselves and go for as long as they'd let me.

FRANCO: You were interviewed by President Obama. How does having the president as a fan affect your material?

SIMON: When I actually could have claimed some expertise in terms of where the drug war was going awry or why the clearance rates on homicides were declining or why we were solving fewer murders and why the city was becoming more problematic to police—when I actually knew these things and had the facts because I was a reporter—nobody gave a fuck. Nobody wanted to talk to me. They weren't inviting me to the White House to discuss this shit. They weren't inviting me to much of anywhere. I was just a grunt in the trenches. I could write my stories, and the police department would read them and every now and then the *Sun* would get behind me and write an editorial on something I'd written. I'm not diminishing that work; I found it to be incredibly gratifying and meaningful, and it all begins with that. Frankly, if we were a healthier society, it would end with that. Journalism, when it's done well, would be sufficient to provoke real change and real argument

and real discussion. We're not that healthy anymore, and some of the best journalism doesn't get the attention it should. But if you take it and transform it into a cathartic narrative of a kind that has always been the elemental force behind drama, if you do that and make people care about characters and about the outcome of a fictional story—holy shit, all of a sudden you're getting invited to college campuses and they're asking you what you think.

We can laugh at it, but a lot of people know all the social science that underlies the Holocaust. They can explain it to you in chapter and verse and with great detail about the sociopolitical and geopolitical forces and the human dynamic that led to the Holocaust. And all of what they know may not be nearly as powerful as the diary of a teenage girl hiding in an attic in Amsterdam and wondering whether she's going to Auschwitz or not. In the microcosmic use of Anne Frank as the narrative constant, the Holocaust comes alive. Sometimes it takes a teenage girl. ■

A bottle of Evan Williams Honey Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey stands on a dark surface. The bottle is filled with a golden liquid and features a label with a bee illustration. To the right of the bottle, two glasses filled with the same liquid are visible. The background is a warm, orange-yellow gradient.

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SEX



God Bless Birth Control

The IUD is not only the most practical and effective contraceptive available. It is revolutionary—offering freedom from anxiety and fear—and a slap in the face of puritanism

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY CRANNA

“Imagine,” my religious-education teacher said one Wednesday evening, her eyes glazing over lustily, “if every time you had intercourse, you were giving yourself over entirely to your spouse, holding nothing back.” I was 16. I could not imagine anything so unsettlingly submissive.

My classmates, one of whom was pregnant, scribbled notes to one another and coughed into the fertile silence. Our teacher sat up, staring down those who hadn’t averted their eyes to the floor or ceiling quickly enough.

“That’s why we believe birth control is an affront to dignity,” the teacher scolded. “That’s why we as Catholics don’t contracept.” I nodded, knowing even then that my ideal relationship involved a lot of condom-free sex and as few pills as possible. At the time, such a lifestyle amounted to a fever dream.

Today, the American sexual climate remains muddled by puritanism, slut panic and pure Luddite fear, but in one fell swoop, the modern woman has the power to undo decades of misplaced morality and bullshit finger wagging. Enter the IUD, or intrauterine device. Discreet, long-lasting and reversible, it has the potential to lead American women into the next sexual revolution. Not even a bat-shit-crazy conservative sweep in 2016 can stop it.

Over the past few years, IUDs have exploded in popularity, rebounding from a prior generation of the technology that almost killed it for good. This was the Dalkon Shield, a *Pac-Man* ghost-shaped model introduced in 1971 that killed a handful of women, subjected tens of thousands more to serious pelvic injuries and led to a product-safety lawsuit second in size only to cases involving asbestos. Many thought the IUD would never recover, but the modern version couldn’t be further from its forebear in safety and efficacy—one 2013 study found that less than one percent of users experience complications. Attitudes are shifting: Last year, the Centers for Disease Control

found that use of long-acting reversible contraceptives had increased fivefold over the past decade, with IUDs leading the charge.

For women several years away from wanting children, long-acting reversible contraception is a low-maintenance godsend; after a check-up, a woman can basically forget about her IUD for three to 12 years, depending on the model. That’s more than enough time to wait out any future antisex chucklehead before he throws a Nixonian double peace sign on his way out of the White House. That’s more than enough time to work up the courage to break up with that dick who doesn’t like his woman to take pills, and more than enough time to hide one’s sexual activity from disapproving parents or partners.

On a practical level, having an IUD means no more last-minute panic over renewing prescriptions before an extended weekend, no more fealty to the demanding schedule of a blister pack. It means knowing that if, for some reason, a woman were to be dropped into a *Blue Lagoon* situation with a handsome stranger, she wouldn’t have to worry about a pregnancy complicating her island time. It means fewer tampon-purchase pit stops, a relief for women and their good-hearted boyfriends alike. It means, for women who believe their choice of birth control is nobody’s fucking business, no more telltale pill packs in the medicine cabinet or repeat trips to the pharmacy.

Next to the IUD, lesser forms of contraception seem as archaic as Fred Flintstone’s foot-powered car. Having one means freedom from the daily responsibility of the pill or subjecting one’s body to the hormones (and side effects) of a birth-control shot. Less than one percent of women who use IUDs get pregnant each year. The CDC estimates that nine percent of women who rely on the pill get pregnant each year; for those who use condoms

the rate is an anxiety-inducing one in five. No matter how lockstep pro-choice or pro-life a couple may be, the stress of an unplanned pregnancy is something everybody would rather avoid.

Much of the public anxiety about the marriage of sex and technology is based on the fear that it will drive people apart, reducing us to dead-eyed fuck zombies humping everything within reach. One can barely open a browser without scrolling past articles bemoaning the alienation sown by dating apps such as Tinder. Five years ago it was the threat of a vague “hookup culture” set to overtake American dorms and high schools. Five years before that it was the ravages of internet porn. Five years from now it will be something else—perhaps sex with robots? But amid the social prognosticating and pearl clutching comes the resurgence of the IUD, an innovation that

promotes exactly the sort of unburdened yet intimate relationships the handwringers have warned are becoming extinct.

Among women in my demographic—New Yorkers whose apartments are barely big enough for a shower, let alone a baby—getting an IUD feels like joining a sorority. In the months after I got mine, the city transformed into the world’s grimmest pharmaceutical ad, starring myself and women I know in varying degrees swapping uterine updates over beers at Sharlene’s. I’ve found myself showing up

BY **ERIN
GLORIA RYAN**

at my office and immediately Gchatting with a co-worker about cramps. I've caught myself singing the praises of my gynecologist's skillful hands in public. "She's like a ninja with my cervix!" I told a friend, out loud, in a normal speaking voice, during rush hour. "It will change your life," one usually snarky friend told me with alarming sincerity the day I made my appointment. She was right. It did. None of us has ever been less pregnant.

The status of the IUD is a fairly recent development. It wasn't until 1965's *Griswold v. Connecticut* that the Supreme Court declared a law barring contraceptive drugs unconstitutional. Six years later the disastrous Dalkon Shield went to market. It would take until 1988 for a modern IUD, a T-shaped copper device that looked and acted nothing like its predecessor, to hit American pharmacies. It remained unpopular: Women, it turned out, were still a tad disturbed by the fact that the last mass-market IUD was an inadvertent torture device. A small plastic hormonal IUD called Mirena, which lasts five years, quietly emerged in the 1990s, followed by even smaller models in the 2010s: Skyla (three years) and Liletta (three years), both so dainty a teenager can use them. Apparently birth control is most marketable when its name conjures images of fairies stripping their way through grad school.

In 2011 a government agency determined that under the Affordable Care Act birth control qualifies as preventative care and IUDs must be covered co-pay-free. This was welcome news for many women, because those who can't afford to pay up front for an IUD likely can't afford to have a child, which I've heard can be quite expensive.

In fact, from 2009 to 2014, a \$25 million grant provided more than 36,000 Colorado teens with long-acting birth control. The result was a 48 percent drop in unwanted pregnancies, saving \$79 million in Medicaid. Yet last year Republican lawmakers killed a bill to provide \$5 million to continue the program, caving to constipated right-wing talk-radio hosts and religious conservatives, who for years had claimed IUDs were abortifacients and using them was equivalent to murdering a human baby.

An important aspect of my Catholic education, and of Judeo-Christian morality writ large, focused on reasons to both fear and crave sex. I was taught that the only good sex happens between married, heterosexual, raw-dogging adults. Experiencing its pleasure was justifiably punishable with the pain of childbirth, depending on how petty God felt that day (and whether he hated you enough to fashion you into a baby girl).



IUDs last for years—longer, hopefully, than political headwinds.

We were taught that married women who used birth control committed "the sin of abortion every day," not understanding that even when stretched to its most fantastic limits, an IUD could result in an abortion every day only if a woman were successfully ovulating every 24 hours and her frequent eggs were being frequently fertilized by an insatiable sex machine husband. Believing that using an IUD is like having an abortion every day is like believing that every baseball pitch results in a home run.

Religious beliefs about contraception should have no bearing on public policy governing health care access, but they do. In 2014 the Supreme Court ruled that Hobby Lobby and other "closely held" private, for-profit companies were within their rights to withhold contraceptive access from insured female employees, provided the company brass's beliefs were "sincerely held." During arguments, lawyers for Hobby Lobby referred to the morning-after pill and IUDs as abortifacients, which, while scientifically incorrect, proved to be "sincerely held" enough for the court. In the end, every justice on the winning side of that five-to-four vote was a Catholic man.

In December, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Burwell*. Under Obamacare, religious organizations that refuse to provide birth control for their employees must sign a form declaring their intent, which forces insurers to offer

third-party, unaffiliated coverage. In this case, plaintiffs have argued that simply signing that form makes them indirectly responsible for employee birth control. If religious conservatives prevail, it would not only be a decision dramatically out of step with the beliefs of the American people, it would be an absurd judicial capitulation to the will of those who believe their religious rights extend to the bodies of others.

More prominent and noisy than a Supreme Court case, of course, is the impending presidential election. If a Republican is installed in the White House, it's highly likely that, in an effort to appease the deep-pocketed wing nuts of the right, the no-co-pay birth control benefit of the Affordable Care Act will be swatted down on day one. None of the candidates has thus far unveiled an "Everybody Gets Pregnant" platform, but the end of Obamacare would mean the resurrection of old barriers between women and IUDs.

IUDs work. Without insurance, the next sexual revolution will be beyond the reach of most American women. But we women have the upper hand: An IUD is a fool- and asshole-proof invention that can, once and for all, establish that each woman's body belongs to her and only her. As far as the human body is concerned, it's stronger than a fence or a missile shield or a tax break. It's what will keep us from backsliding into the Dark Ages. No matter who is in office. And thank God for that. ■

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POLITICS

DEATH OF A CONSULTANT

Trump, Hillary, Bernie and the business of authenticity

It was three A.M., and Stuart Stevens paced frantically in his hotel room. Hours earlier he had received the latest campaign polls, and his candidate was behind by several points. Now Stevens couldn't sleep. He anxiously e-mailed ideas to colleagues, rethought the latest cut of an ad and crafted lines for a big speech less than 24 hours away. He was in the fight of his life.

That was four years ago, when Stevens ran Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. Now, as the 2016 election cycle kicks up, similar scenes are playing out across the country. Huddled in hotels is a super-elite group of consultants—chief strategists for a nearly \$1 billion enterprise known as a presidential campaign.

Sometimes the job pressure is so intense that strategists puke, as Stevens did when he sent an unscripted Clint Eastwood on stage with an empty chair and the star had a “conversation” with an imaginary President Barack Obama for an excruciating 12 minutes of prime-time TV. Backstage, Stevens also threw furniture. But he and others in the business say it's worth enduring the pressure for the high that comes with it.

“The work has all the fun of combat, but nobody dies—or at least not very often,” says Stevens. “The appeal is simple: Your guy is good, the other guy is evil, and every day you wake up trying to beat the crap out of the other guy.”

Political strategists have operated behind the scenes since at least 1932, when Franklin D. Roosevelt first ran for the White House. During a campaign stop in Pittsburgh, FDR pledged to overhaul the federal budget, but four years later, when he was up for reelection, the government was still spending more than it was taking in. Roosevelt turned to his advisor. “I've got to go back to Pittsburgh,” he said. “The last thing I said there was that I was going to balance the budget. What do I say now?” The strategist replied, “Mr. President, deny that you've ever been in Pittsburgh.”



BY **JOHN MERONEY**

That kind of cunning earns today's top strategists up to \$100,000 a month. For that money, they teach politicians how to walk and talk, and even tell them what to wear. Most aren't zealous ideologues. They don't believe they're carrying out a lofty patriotic duty. They just love a good fight.

“Doing this is like coaching in big-time college sports or the NFL,” says Steve Schmidt, chief strategist for John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign. “You make thousands of decisions, and all of them play out in the leads of the news, day after day, for the whole world to see.”

The appeal is primal. “I fancied myself more of an angry linebacker type, running around looking for somebody to hit,” says Stevens. Plus, these consultants help shape the national conversation. That ability to influence becomes addictive. When McCain told Schmidt his campaign was broke, Schmidt—so exhilarated by the work—offered to stay on for free.

Just when it looked as if the usual strategists would orchestrate another campaign season,

last spring Donald Trump announced his candidacy and dumped the whole political process on its head. Trump doesn't employ high-priced strategists, and his taunts to the “losers” who do helped drive up his poll numbers. When veteran strategists Alex Castellanos and Charlie Black appeared on *Meet the Press* last year, moderator Chuck Todd said, “You guys are who [Trump's] running against.” Trump had violated the number one rule of politics: Don't give away the game.

Trump's message resonates in part because he confirms what increasingly media-savvy voters have gleaned from a steady diet of social media, *House of Cards* and cable-TV news: Namely, we see through the sham. That's why Kate McKinnon's parody of Hillary Clinton on *Saturday Night Live* last fall rings so true. “I think you're really going to

like the Hillary Clinton that my team and I have created for this debate,” she says as Clinton. “She's warm—but strong. Flawed—yet perfect. Relaxed—but racing full speed toward the White House like the T-1000 from *Terminator*.”

Eschewing scripted speeches and talking about how the system is rigged also propelled Democrat Bernie Sanders into becoming Hillary Clinton's most potent challenger. Sanders showed he didn't need a Beltway team to fashion his persona. He uses leading Democratic strategist Tad Devine for operational needs, not for brand building. Besides, Devine claims, Sanders has been the same since he was elected to Congress in 1990. “He has always spoken his mind. The message that he's delivering in this campaign, he has delivered for a decade.” Still, Devine admits that a seismic shift is under way, even if neither Sanders nor Trump makes it to the Oval Office. The game that political strategists used to play has been put to rest for good.

“Authenticity,” says Devine, “is now the coin of the realm.” ■

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RACHEL MADDOW

Upstairs in MSNBC's studios at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in Manhattan, Rachel Maddow is practically mainlining the news of the day. Her staff of 20 (women outnumber men and diversity of skin color, gender expression and age is clearly valued) calls out headlines as Maddow scribbles in micro-script on a whiteboard: bombs in Kandahar, pollution in Beijing, idiocy on the campaign trail, a two-star Navy admiral reprimanded for public drunkenness and nudity. "Oh, I love when government and nakedness collide," Maddow says to big laughs.

Of 50-odd story possibilities, roughly six make The Rachel Maddow Show, the nightly news and opinion program with a strong lefty bent that debuted two months before Barack Obama was elected in 2008. With nearly a million viewers each night, it is MSNBC's highest-rated prime-time series and will inevitably boom bigger as November's presidential election draws nearer.

At 42, Maddow isn't like other TV talking heads. She was the first openly gay anchor to host a major news program in the U.S. and has never pretended to be a golden girl. "I once had long, straight blonde hair but then cut it short and came back looking like Rick Santorum," she says. Maddow does not mask her liberalism, but even right-wingers respect how sharp, well-informed and sane she is. Her 2012 best-seller, *Drift*, on America's slide into perpetual war, includes a blurb from Fox News chairman and CEO Roger Ailes.

Maddow grew up in conservative Castro Valley, California, where her former Air Force captain father was a lawyer and her mother a school administrator. By the age of seven she was reading the newspaper; in her teens, she was a standout athlete turned AIDS activist. She went to Stanford University and then to the University of Oxford as America's first openly gay Rhodes Scholar. She holds an Oxford Ph.D. in political science.

Academia could not contain Maddow's enthu-

siasm for talk, and she broke into radio in 1999 after an open call at WRNX in Amherst, Massachusetts. (That same year she met her partner, Susan Mikula, an artist; the Berkshires remain their primary residence.) Obsessive about research and with a gift for crystallizing even the wonkiest white papers, Maddow helped launch Air America in 2004 before landing her nine P.M. spot on MSNBC in New York, where PLAYBOY Contributing Editor **David Hochman** recently met with her for a couple of days. Hochman has interviewed many pundits for PLAYBOY—Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, Bill Maher, Chris Wallace—but had never met an anchor who works as diligently as Maddow. He reports: "She's like the girl in high school who reads every assignment, aces every test, does all the extra credits and still manages to run the yearbook, win the swim meet and get the president of the United States to write her back."

PLAYBOY: After almost eight years of President Obama, we are once again talking about

change. As a liberal, are you still feeling hope?

MADDOW: Theoretically. But historically speaking, after Democrats hold two terms in the White House, the public picks a Republican to replace them. There are a lot of determining factors in who wins. People say it's the price of gas and the growth in the economy, but sometimes it's the we're-ready-for-something-new thing. There's a reason that, almost without fail, in every midterm election the president's party loses seats. There are psychological cycles in American politics that are pretty easy to read, and in 2016 Democrats are facing one of those cycles in which they are structurally disadvantaged. It's a matter of civic and international interest whom the Republicans pick, because even if they pick a fascist, structurally speaking that fascist or that con man, let's say, will have a 50 percent chance of becoming president of the United States.

I'm a liberal, but the thing that interests me most in American politics is center-right to far-right politics, because (a) it's a laugh a minute

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AMY TROOST**





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and (b) there's no stasis. There's no solid core moving forward. You never know who's going to come along.

PLAYBOY: Donald Trump's strong come-on was certainly a stunner. What conditions gave rise to his popularity?

MADDOW: First of all, anybody in day-to-day political coverage who says they saw it coming you can write off for the rest of their life. Trump's explosion was not just improbable, it was laugh-out-loud funny. But it's not like there's no precedent for this. Silvio Berlusconi, the longest-serving Italian leader after World War II, was a zillionaire media guy with *bunga-bunga* sex parties who had no political pedigree whatsoever and just got in there and did a terrible job and embarrassed the nation. But they picked him. Jesse Ventura was elected governor of Minnesota and then didn't really do anything. Arnold Schwarzenegger became a non-consequential governor of California purely on the basis of having had a tough-sounding tagline in one of his movie franchises. People make decisions like this all the time, even enlightened persons.

PLAYBOY: Some celebrity candidates turn out okay. Ronald Reagan did well for himself.

MADDOW: Ronald Reagan was a consequential guy. Al Franken is a very serious and effective Minnesota senator. Former child star Sheila Kuehl does meaningful work for California. That said, to go from being a race-baiting nativist buffoon reality-star professional sexist to being the distant front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, even for a while, says almost less about Trump than about the Republican Party.

It's fascinating how Republicans pick their candidates. Honestly, I think the Republican Party's voters are drunk. I'm sure they're having a great time and they feel euphoric, but you can't eat a ton of greasy food and not feel terrible in the morning. I mean, Ben Carson!

What's amazing is that the conservative movement since the Reagan era has been telling conservatives that government is the problem, which makes experience running government a mark on your record. Having constructive ideas about what government could do makes you a suspicious character. Honestly, the very idea that you would thirst

to hold high government office in Washington, D.C. almost inherently disqualifies you as a Republican. So *everybody* is qualified, and therefore you pick the person who most entertains you. It's a weird thing.

PLAYBOY: Weren't we supposed to be in the middle of another Bush vs. Clinton battle right now?

MADDOW: That was the assumption ever since Obama became the clear nominee in 2008—Hillary vs. Jeb. Now, eight years later we're in a campaign where we've watched Jeb Bush set fire to tens of millions of dollars and get in trouble every time he opens his mouth. At one point he actually said, "You are *look-ing* at the nominee and I am *go-ing* to face Hillary Clinton and I am *go-ing* to whoop her." Come on, Jeb. You actually have to drop a *g* some-

TEN TO 15 PERCENT HATE ME, THINK I'M A MAN OR A SOCIALIST AND WANT ME DEAD.

where if you're gonna talk like an everyday person. You have to use a contraction.

PLAYBOY: Regardless of which candidates are still in the running when this publishes, which Republicans have the most to offer?

MADDOW: The general election is so hard to talk about in the abstract this year, because all the Republican prospects have been so freaky-making. Look at Ted Cruz, who always appears to me as if he's portraying a character rather than being an actual politician. It's impossible to know what he truly believes. Marco Rubio, on the other hand, hasn't really done anything in his life other than be a politician. I just can't figure out how he spends his time. He made this interesting and dramatic commitment at the outset of his presidential campaign that he would not run for reelection to the Senate because he's so confident he'll be president. But

then it became an issue that he doesn't show up to vote. He has the worst voting record in the Senate, yet he clearly takes meetings every time a hedge fund billionaire calls. It's hard to see Marco Rubio supporting anything other than Marco Rubio.

PLAYBOY: Now or in the future, what about Chris Christie?

MADDOW: My Spidey sense tells me he's going to do well in New Hampshire. We'll know by the time people read this. He's a good campaigner. He has charisma. He has the right tough-guy persona he can turn on and off when he wants. Okay, so he has been like Godzilla stomping on New Jersey as governor. A true disaster. Republicans don't care about that. But if Christie makes it to March and April, the problem is the Bridgegate trials will be starting, people will be pleading not guilty, and fingers will be pointing at him.

PLAYBOY: Moving on to the Democrats, what does Hillary Clinton need to do to win?

MADDOW: She has to avoid unforced errors. The political track we've seen a few times with Hillary is that when she's ahead she gets a little loosey-goosey. When people start talking about her as inevitable, she believes she's inevitable and sort of moves on to the next thing. You can't do that. Hillary stops paying attention to the fundamentals of being a good candidate when she's ahead.

PLAYBOY: Carly Fiorina quipped last year that if you want to stump a Democrat, ask him or

her to name something Hillary Clinton has accomplished. What has Clinton accomplished?

MADDOW: She has a pretty good legislative record as a senator. Her time as secretary of state was accomplished. Most of what we did in Libya, whether or not you like it, was orchestrated by her. I think getting China onboard with the climate deal had a lot to do with her. Getting to Osama bin Laden. Improving America's status abroad. But that question is bullshit. Let's talk about Carly Fiorina's accomplishments at HP when she left versus when she got there.

PLAYBOY: Presuming Clinton is the nominee, whom should she pick as a running mate?

MADDOW: Sadly, I feel her running mate definitely has to be a dude, even though there are so many women coming ripe in their political careers who would be amazing. Missouri senator Claire McCaskill would be amazing. Minnesota

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senator Amy Klobuchar would be amazing. Obviously Elizabeth Warren if you have a more conservative candidate like Hillary Clinton.

Everybody says Clinton is going to pick Julian Castro, the HUD secretary, but I've been trying to start another rumor. Maybe saying it in *PLAYBOY* will finally make it take hold. It makes total sense to me that she'll pick Stanley McChrystal, the Army general who had a bad ending because of a *Rolling Stone* interview in which he ripped into Joe Biden. There's a sort of realpolitik gender issue around Clinton getting the nomination that requires she pick a Grizzly Adams as her vice president. But it can't be somebody who might overshadow her to the extent that people see the man in charge and the woman in a supporting role. It can't be somebody who feels he ought to be at the top of the ticket.

McChrystal doesn't come from a traditional political background, which I think makes a lot of sense. Also, this election may come down to who has the best national security message. The one Hillary has is really different from President Obama's. She told me to my face that she's not as hawkish as people think she is and she won't be a more aggressive commander-in-chief, but I don't believe her.

PLAYBOY: What difference would it make to have a woman as president?

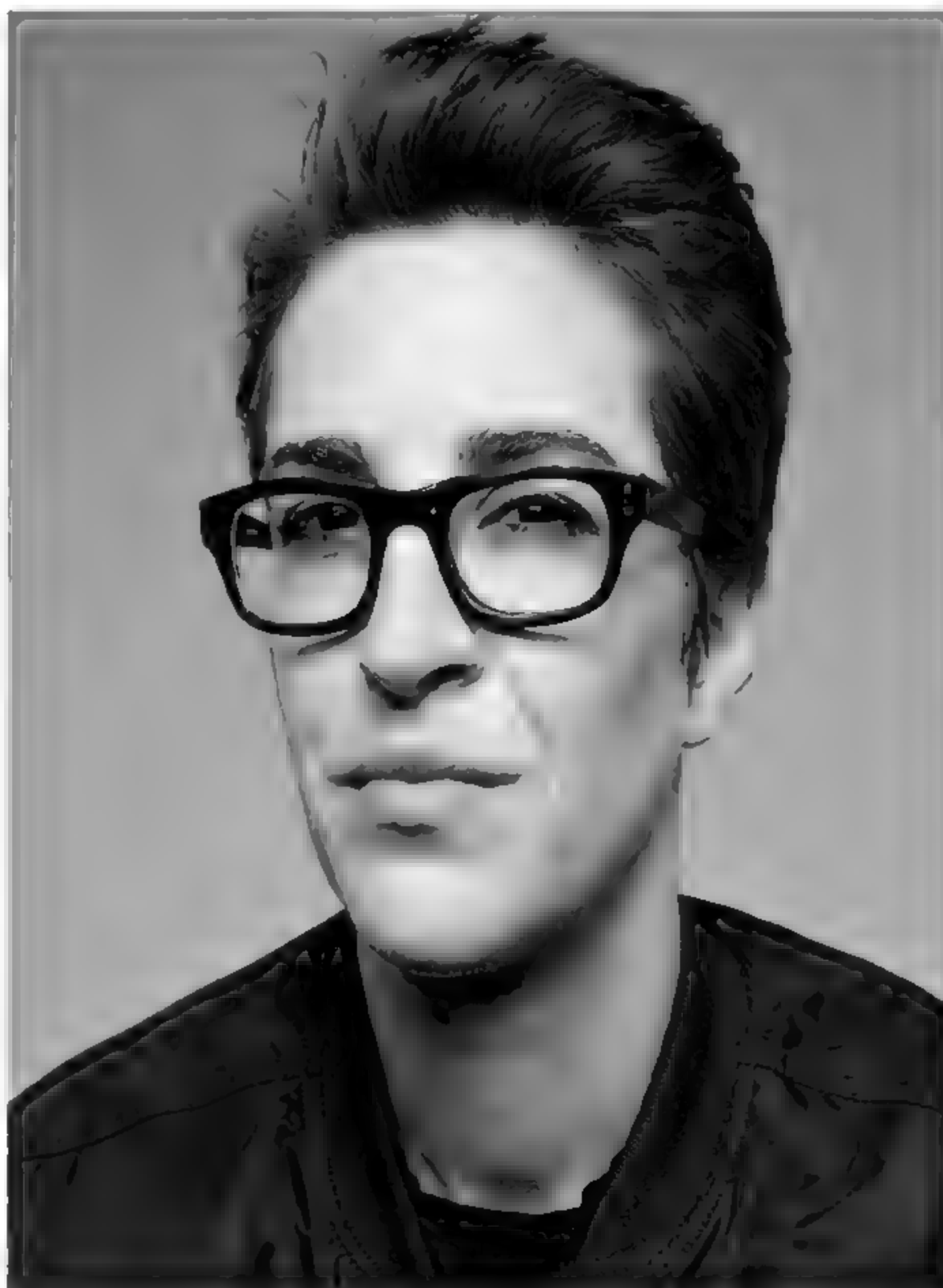
MADDOW: It breaks the glass ceiling, which means the next woman to do it will be the second woman. Not that it always works that way. Britain had just the one; Israel had just the one. You do see when other countries get a female leader, particularly an iconic female leader, it doesn't necessarily open the floodgates. It is unusual that we're this old, robust democracy and pluralistic society, and we haven't gotten ours yet. The gender achievement at the top in every single political representation really sucks. I mean, we're super-psyched that we have 20 women senators. Yay, 20! Um, there are 100. I can do that math.

It's worse in the Republican Party, but in the Democratic Party women aren't hitting the top tiers as fast and as frequently as statistically they ought to be, even when you compare us with other countries. I can't help but think that electing a woman president might speed that pace a bit. Still, if Clinton gets elected, that's about her, and her legacy will be determined

by how good a president she is. Just being a woman gets you only so far.

PLAYBOY: You've spent time knee-to-knee with Clinton and Bernie Sanders. What are they like off camera?

MADDOW: It's fascinating. I did an hour-long interview with Hillary in the studio last fall, right before the televised forum I did with the candidates in South Carolina. We had no ground rules. She had no idea what I was going to ask. When she came in, she listened to me so hard it felt like she was prying my thoughts out of my brain through my eyeballs. Hillary's



got tractor beams. She was so intently focused and had a ton to say about every issue. It's the same way Bill Clinton would give press conferences when he was president and wouldn't want them to end. He'd just be like, "Bring it on." She kind of has that going on. She's not that guarded. She has something to say about everything. She's policy-minded—that to me is a nice form of seriousness in a politician—and has an ability to handle a wide range of subject matter. Very impressive.

But then, a couple of weeks later, at the forum in South Carolina, it wasn't just us and the camera guy in the room. There were 3,000 people, and it was as if I wasn't there. I would ask

her a question and she would physically turn to the audience and answer. I was like, "Yoo-hoo, over here!"

PLAYBOY: Was Sanders like that too?

MADDOW: The thing that's interesting about Bernie is that he is a freaking good politician, and he's aggressive. We had a commercial break in the middle of our discussion because I wanted to have a reset. During that break, Martin O'Malley was hyperventilating. Hillary started playing to the audience again and waving to people like she was campaigning. Bernie was working *me* to ask the questions he wanted for the

second half. He was like, "When we come back, are you going to ask me about...?"

I was like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. You're supposed to be Mr. Socialist."

PLAYBOY: Can you picture him being president?

MADDOW: Bernie Sanders is running this fascinating campaign where he's all about people being angry and dissatisfied and frustrated. He wants you to be disaffected and frustrated about an economic system that keeps you from ever ascending the ladder. That is a great emotion to tap into for a politician but a hard lesson to sell in terms of where people should channel it. If that message works for you, it's cathartic. People love him. They really do feel the Bern. He gets tens of thousands of people to turn out, but that sort of economic populism is a tough sell. The diagnosis is right; the cure isn't easy. My prediction for Bernie: populist hero forever but hard to imagine him still being there at the convention.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about your MSNBC show. What do you say to people on the right who see the lion's share of your segments going after corrup-

tion and extreme views among Republicans at a time when we've had a Democratic president for seven years and a Congress in which Democrats have held at least equal power? Is your outrage selective?

MADDOW: I don't think so. I defy anybody to have shown more glee or spent more minutes of airtime enjoying the spectacularly corrupt and profane downfall of Rod Blagojevich in Illinois. I don't know of any other national news coverage for a story like that of Kathleen Kane, the first elected Democratic attorney general in Pennsylvania, who leaked embarrassing racist and pornographic work e-mails of government officials and police officers



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that were part of a secret grand jury document. I mean, hello! California state senator Leland Yee, who went down for your standard corruption plus selling shoulder-fired missiles and rocket-propelled grenades. That stuff is gold. I don't want to go so far as to say I enjoy it, but I am enthusiastic about covering profane corruption and extremism when anybody brings it to the fore. But certainly I love covering Republican politics in general more than I like anything else in American politics. It's just my area of interest.

PLAYBOY: Do you think emotions and opinions have overtaken analysis and facts in the American media? Or is it just some collective fantasy that news used to be more objective?

MADDOW: I don't have any animus toward the old news model, but I do think it's facile and reductive to claim news was once unbiased and is now biased. Every time you choose which stories are important that day, you're using news judgment and your subjective perspective on things. I lived through a lot of news cycles as an American citizen before I was ever in the media. Much of the news I cared about was designated as unimportant, frivolous or not worthy of mainstream attention, and that was someone's political decision.

PLAYBOY: Which stories are you talking about?

MADDOW: Well, I'm thinking about the AIDS movement. Growing up as a gay kid in the 1980s and 1990s in the San Francisco Bay Area when that devastating epidemic hit, and it being literally laughed at in the White House briefing room and never treated by mainstream media as anything other than a sidebar medical issue or a human interest story about fags. That was someone's subjective decision. I make subjective decisions too. I just own it.

PLAYBOY: You were an activist before you were an anchor. Do you still feel like one?

MADDOW: There are some connections. As a teenager and well into my 20s, being an activist was what I did full-time. I wanted to be good at it, and in order to be good and to get stuff done, I needed to make great arguments. That's different from being good at being bossy, which I've always been. As I got into AIDS activism

in particular, I consciously sought to build the skills to make persuasive arguments so I could help effect change.

The media side of me is different from the activist side. As a media person, I like explaining things. Most of what I do is take the universe of known information and explain what's important about it, what's new about it and what to watch for next. I find that explanatory work very satisfying. We have this little mantra on the show: Increase the amount of useful information in the world. Explain what's going on in a way that resonates with people and helps them understand what's truly important about it. That's what I try to do. Some people like it. Others can't stand it.

PLAYBOY: What is your hate mail like?

MADDOW: It's interesting. I get a lot of it, but

security is really good. If you look out that window, you'll see snipers.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of which, have you heard any interesting solutions for gun violence?

MADDOW: Yes, there are good ideas out there, like the micro-stamping of ammunition so you can trace every bullet. Most gun deaths in America are not mass shootings; most are small-scale crimes. Being able to solve gun crimes by connecting bullets to the people using them could really help. We did that with Tasers. A Taser shoots this confetti that helps you identify it. Why can't we do that with guns? Also, smart guns, which they have in other countries, as well as in the most recent James Bond movie. Nobody other than you can fire the weapon. That won't solve everything, but it will help with the day-to-day violence and accidents.

PLAYBOY: What would it take to get the National Rifle Association on board with changes like those?

MADDOW: Raw political force. The power of the NRA used to be that it held sway over Democrats in a way that was unusual for a right-leaning interest group. More and more, the NRA is just a Republican interest group. As recently as the Bill Clinton era and even after, in the George W. Bush era, a considerable number of Democrats used to compete on the basis of their good standing with the

NRA. Democrats now compete on the basis of who is the most aggressive *against* the NRA. That hasn't leaked over into Republican politics yet, but Democrats have really changed. When Democrats win, the NRA loses. It was a brilliant strategy for decades to be able to keep its hold on Democrats, but it just pushed it too hard. I think Wayne LaPierre made them into an embarrassing organization that no Democrat wants to be a part of now. That's really going to hurt them, but it will require raw Democratic political power. If the Democrats use their political might in the 2016 election, within four years the NRA could be effectively dead in terms of strangle-holding those federal issues.

PLAYBOY: We keep seeing videos of police-related shootings, whether captured on smartphones and shared through social media

THE FIRST TIME I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE A LESBIAN, I REMEMBER THINKING: BUT I HATE SOFTBALL.

it has always been the same percentage of negative to positive. The first media job I ever had was in 1999 and 2000. I was on the radio, on *The Dave in the Morning Show* on WRNX in western Massachusetts. I was the lesbian newsgirl sidekick, and part of the shtick was that I was gay and looked like a dyke. That offended some people. Typical hate mail was the same then as it is now: all caps, misspelled, saying that I'm a man or I'm going to hell for being gay or that I'm a socialist. Or "I'm going to kill you." That was 10 to 15 percent. Then I moved to my own show in Northampton, Massachusetts. That was *Big Breakfast*. It was the same thing. Then I got to Air America and had a national platform, and again it was the exact same proportion. Then I get a show on MSNBC, and again 10 to 15 percent hate me, think I'm a man or a socialist and want me dead. Fortunately NBC



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or released by police departments amid public pressure. Much of the furor is fueled by race. Is the situation as dire as it looks?

MADDOW: I think so. Policing in our country is something in which authority is dispersed in a way that doesn't always lend itself to the kind of stuff you want to see on the news. Obviously I think choosing to be a police officer is an incredibly patriotic and honorable thing to do. But running a good police organization in this country is something for which we don't have high expectations. We expect police departments to have trouble, and we don't give them much help in terms of running themselves in a way that avoids that. It's a management problem and a government-accountability problem that are long-standing. You should expect things to go wrong when you give people guns and the authority to physically control others. But cameras are the beginning of the solution. The more cameras out there, the more incidents come to light. It helps you see the different fault lines, and there are many fault lines in America.

PLAYBOY: The country feels as divided as ever.

MADDOW: We're a raucous, fight-it-out kind of country, and we always have been. America had a civil war. People used to beat each other to death with canes on the floor of the Senate. We had race riots.

You get a lot of happy talk about healing and unity. That can be inspirational, but when fault lines ease, new ones always form. You can see the split by race. You can see it by class. Urban-rural, red state-blue state. Insurrectionist versus statist. The naysayers versus whatever Obama tried to get done.

PLAYBOY: Give us your report card on the president's two terms.

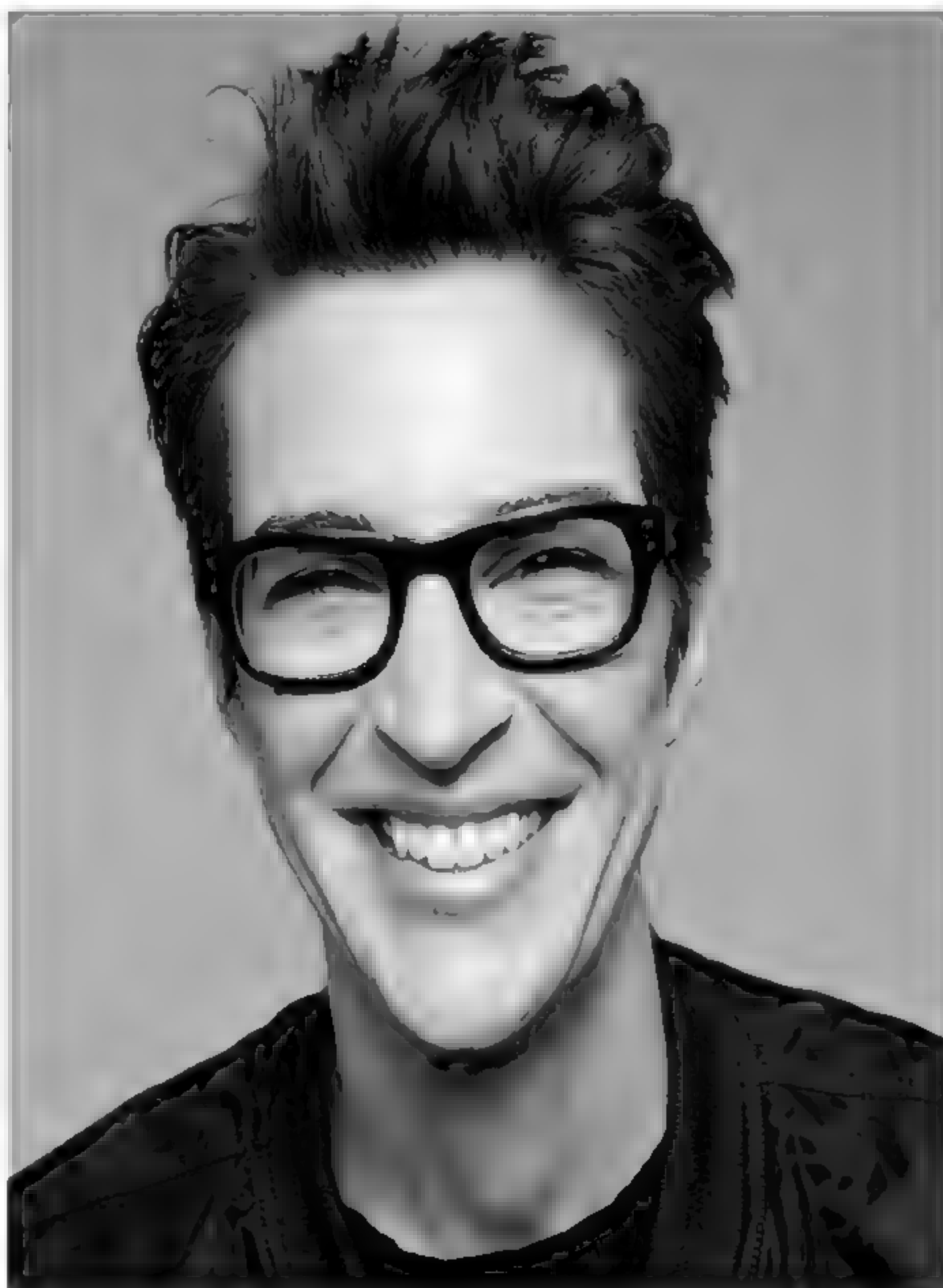
MADDOW: Obama will go down as one of the more consequential and good presidents in American history, mostly because of what he did with what he was handed. Recovering from the Great Recession alone made me glad Paul Ryan wasn't in the vice president's office trying to make economic policy and going, "Hey, we've got to cut taxes for the rich!" In many ways, Obama held the tiller firm and got us through a terrible time.

PLAYBOY: Major disappointments?

MADDOW: The amount of war-making he's done. I'm shocked we're still in Afghanistan.

We've restarted the war in Iraq, and now we have a new war in Syria to go with it, and in the interim we had a war in Libya, plus Somalia, plus Yemen. It felt like circumstances drove him more than he drove circumstances. That said, could you do differently?

There isn't an Obama doctrine. The closest we got to an Obama doctrine was what Secretary Clinton articulated in the first term, which was that we're going to remake the world diplomatically. We're going to up our soft-power capability and reshape circumstances that way. That didn't work. Partly it's because Obama wasn't a



progressive. He was a centrist. We need an aggressive progressive national security agenda. Guys like Chris Murphy and Tim Kaine in the Senate have been really good about that. Congressman Adam Schiff and Hillary Clinton are both redefining national security. That's where the vacuum is. The Republicans have nothing to offer on this at all. Nothing. Lindsey Graham is the only one with any sort of foreign policy idea, and it's weird how much the Republicans hate him. He's got so much going on as far as what they supposedly care about. He's like John McCain on steroids in terms of how many wars he wants. He's adorable. But his name is Lindsey and he's not married. Is that

the worry? You'd think he'd have the angry Republican hordes rallying around him.

PLAYBOY: Why is the right so much better than the left at channeling fury? There's really no book industry or talk radio industry for liberals as there is for conservatives.

MADDOW: That's true. The commentary industry on the right makes zillionaires out of these people. That gives them tons of incentive to be outrageous and provocative. Watch Rush Limbaugh, who is really washed up at this point as a radio host. He's been around too long and he says too many of the same things.

But every once in a while he makes a calculated decision to say something to get himself in trouble. It's his little cry for attention. He trolls everybody, everybody's outraged, and people pay attention to him for another week. Then he disappears again.

PLAYBOY: It's a survival strategy.

MADDOW: It's marketing. If you tell people, "Don't listen to anybody else. You can trust only me. Everybody else is out to get you," not only do you get them to listen to you, but you get them to listen to you exclusively. That's how Fox News is so dominant in cable news. It's not that a majority of the country watches it. It's just that it has locked up all the conservative audience. Frankly, that creates real problems for conservative politicians in that their feedback loop is closed in terms of outside information and which stories are relevant, including understanding how their rhetoric is going to be heard. If they only hear themselves reflected back by people who agree with them, they have a hard time dealing with a general-election audience. I think we've seen that with everybody from Mitt Rom-

ney on down. We on the left have never made that case: Don't watch anybody else, or everybody else is terrible and part of a conspiracy and lying to you and against you. Maybe we should have.

PLAYBOY: How much money would you need to go head-to-head in a debate with Ann Coulter on your show?

MADDOW: [Sighs] The one rule I have about my show is that, by virtue of being invited, I'm telling my viewers that this person has something to say that you ought to listen to. That's the rule. Ann Coulter would not meet that requirement.

PLAYBOY: Do you see Fox News as an evil empire?



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MADDOW: There are people on Fox I respect a lot. I'm friends with Greta Van Susteren. Real friends. She's a good social drinker, she's funny, her husband's hilarious, and she always has great stories about, like, just coming back from Burundi. She's a warhorse. Shepard Smith is awesome. The same way I want to hear Bill Maher talk about his interesting life, I want to hear Shep talk about his. He's a fun-loving guy who's got the tiger by the tail. Because he's on Fox, he's Mr. Gravititas, but he's such a crazed football fan that at some point he will cast a bet on a game that results in a face tattoo. I used to love Glenn Beck on the radio before he went into Fox. He was approaching my hero Howard Stern in terms of how good he was with the medium. But then he went into messianic territory. He thinks of himself in religious terms now, which is no fun for anybody.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever hang with Bill O'Reilly?

MADDOW: I met him once. He's very tall and he has a very soft handshake. When some guys shake hands with a woman, they turn their hands at the last second. You think you're going to get a normal handshake, and then all of a sudden it's like a little garden spade. It's like holding a sock puppet. I don't know if that's a chivalrous thing, but I wouldn't think he'd turn his hand like that with a man. Maybe he thought I was a dude and then realized I was a woman and quick-changed it.

PLAYBOY: Just in terms of appearance and charisma, who's the hottest anchor on TV news?

MADDOW: It is weird to be in an industry where everybody is so good-looking. I do not think of myself as a physically attractive person. I think of myself as a goober. I dress like an eight-year-old with a credit card, and I eat like that too—burritos or pizza or s'mores. That's it. But these ostentatiously attractive people! Thomas Roberts on MSNBC is a golden god.

All those blondes on Fox. I mean, if I worked at a place where they did not allow you to wear sleeves, could you imagine? Or where all desks had Lucite bottoms so you could show your shins. Jesus, I feel very lucky that at MSNBC they're like, "You're fine in the \$19 blazer."

PLAYBOY: By the way, is it true you came

out as gay by posting it on a bathroom wall at Stanford?

MADDOW: I put up a public letter in the stalls in my dorm. I was a freshman and very cocky and had incredible self-regard, as all good 17-year-olds do. I hadn't known I was gay for a long time. I was just figuring it out. There were very few openly lesbian students. Once I was sure, I quickly realized that I did not want to be a closeted person—that that was a weak place to be.

PLAYBOY: Had you dated guys?

MADDOW: Oh yeah, I had high school boy-friends and stuff. But there was an inchoate sense of confusion and brokenness. Boys weren't as thrilling to me as they were for my girlfriends, and I definitely found myself drawn more to the charming young women

NO PUNDIT SHOULD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PRACTICE OF POLITICS, EVER.

in my life than to the men.

PLAYBOY: Did you have sex with guys?

MADDOW: Oh right, this is **PLAYBOY**. [laughs] It's none of your business! The point is, I stopped thinking of myself as broken when it occurred to me that I might actually not be just a failed heterosexual. I might be this other thing. It was sort of an abstract concept. The first time I consciously thought I might be a lesbian I remember thinking: But I hate softball. Then I went to college and started sleeping with girls and was like, Ah, that's what my body's for!

PLAYBOY: Is it easier to be gay in America in 2016?

MADDOW: It's definitely different. The biggest change is that gay culture is more normative. It was really important to me as a kid

coming out that there was a gay community with physical gay places in the world. People coming out today don't feel they have a specific spot. They don't have to go to a bar. They don't have to belong to gay associations or use gay travel pathways. Kids are coming out on Facebook now.

PLAYBOY: How has marriage equality changed things?

MADDOW: It's strange. Gay cultural expectations around monogamy and long-term relationships and even around what you call each other are following the straight model of marriage. That's fine if you think the straight model of marriage is awesome. [Editor's note: Maddow and Mikula are not married.] Ultimately, I think you'll see the same patterns in married gay couples that you see in married straight

couples. As gay people get more integrated into society and are less ghettoized, our lives will be just like everybody else's, and that's sad to me. Sometimes it fits to be mainstream and sometimes it doesn't. I don't want to give up everything that made my community awesome before we were accepted.

PLAYBOY: What's your take on Caitlyn Jenner?

MADDOW: I'm so pop culture illiterate that I did not know there was a connection between Bruce Jenner and the Kardashians. It also took me a long time to figure out that the Kardashians don't have jobs. But the nice thing about Caitlyn Jenner is that America gets to hear from

a transgender person talking about transgender issues. The idea of transgender-equality issues being litigated by the gay community always rubbed me the wrong way. People should be able to speak for themselves on their own terms. If what the media needs to actually talk to a transgender person is for that person to be famous, then let that be step one.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel the same way about Charlie Sheen and the fight against HIV?

MADDOW: Oh my God. The universal through line for AIDS, civil rights, refugees, anti-Semitism, people who are maligned and excluded and denounced as dangerous and insidious—the universal through line for making that better, for curing it and for fighting back is people speaking on their own terms. So it's one thing for Charlie Sheen to



INTERVIEW

come out and do a PSA saying “Be nice to HIV-positive people.” Charlie Sheen coming out and saying “I am HIV positive” is abundantly more powerful.

Coming out matters. Coming out is powerful. It doesn’t work only when saints come out. It’s about seeing people as fully human entities and having to reckon with whatever it is you don’t like about them in nonreductive human terms. That’s the magic. That’s how the moral arc of the universe bends toward justice.

PLAYBOY: Let’s switch gears. What do you do on your rare days off?

MADDOW: I’m a music fan. I’m kind of obsessed with Frank Morgan and jazz guys like that. I’ve got a Thelonious Monk problem. I also love all country music. I want to be an evangelist for this guy from Oklahoma named John Moreland, who is literally the Bruce Springsteen of our era, though nobody knows who he is. There’s a band called Lucero that turned me into a major fangirl recently. So music, a little fly-fishing, and I’m a good drinker. I like my beer, and I can mix a pretty impressive cocktail.

PLAYBOY: What’s your go-to?

MADDOW: An aviation is kind of a martini, in that it starts with two ounces of Plymouth gin. I keep the cocktail glass in the freezer while I mix the gin in a shaker with three quarters of an ounce of fresh lemon juice, two teaspoons of Luxardo maraschino liqueur and a bar spoon of *crème de violette*. Add a lot of ice. Stir very quietly. Take the glass out of the freezer, strain drink into glass, marvel at the sky-like color, drink too fast, make another one.

Otherwise, I work 12-ish hours a day, five days a week, 50 weeks a year, and I don’t take vacations and I don’t have lunch. I eat two meals a day at my desk. I live what I think of as my own life between two A.M. Saturday morning and seven A.M. Monday morning. On weekends, I have a place behind our house in western Massachusetts where I watch football, and there’s a hot tub in it. I get to see Susan, who is patient enough to put up with me. Without her, I might not be able to get out of bed on Monday morning.

PLAYBOY: You’ve spoken about struggling with depression. Is that something you still deal with?

MADDOW: Depression is a very real, very present part of my entire adult life. It doesn’t

cure itself and it’s not sadness. It’s a different thing. I’ve experienced the full range of emotions from happy to sad, just like everybody else, but for me the way depression manifests is a sort of suppressing of everything, good and bad, and I kind of disconnect. It’s like somebody hits the mute button. It’s very lonely, and it can be alienating.

PLAYBOY: How do you get through it?

MADDOW: Well, that’s the thing I need to be most deliberate about in my life. I can’t make the depression go away, but I can be cognizant of it. It helps to be able to talk about it. It’s



lifesaving to me that Susan both knows about it and understands it and pays attention to me on those grounds. As I’ve gotten older, the exact cyclical experience of it in terms of how long it lasts and how frequently it comes changes a little, and I just try to be patient with myself. If it ever becomes permanent, I’ll need to treat it medically, but right now I don’t.

PLAYBOY: You appear quite chipper on TV.

MADDOW: It’s adrenaline. Doing the show is like jumping out of an airplane. Here it comes. It’s nine o’clock. This is going to happen no matter what I do.

PLAYBOY: What’s the future of news? Will the era of the talking-head anchor go on forever?

MADDOW: Five years ago, if you’d told me we would still be doing news this way, I would have called you crazy. Everybody always predicts we’re going away, and yet here we are. Even network news is doing as great as it ever has. I think there’s one very simple reason we persist, which is that there are some things you want to watch live. Yeah, you may want to watch on your phone or your tablet instead of your TV, but you need a person who gets information and explains to you what’s going on in a way you can visually connect with. Showing you the pictures, telling you what they are. That’s what keeps me in business.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever think about getting into politics? What would a Maddow administration look like?

MADDOW: At the White House? Jesus, no! It would look like me getting sworn in and handing it over to my vice president, Amy Klobuchar, before immediately resigning. No pundit should have anything to do with the practice of politics ever, ever, ever. It would be like taking the average caller into an ESPN show and letting him go, “Snap the ball to Brady.” You just don’t do it.

PLAYBOY: Humor us a little. What would you most like to fix about this country?

MADDOW: Well, we have some foundational challenges. The fact that we don’t have a middle class and haven’t for a generation now is foundational to whether or not our government can ever work again. I think the threat of climate change, and what that’s doing already, is sobering. I think the apathy and disdain for our own political processes is a real problem, not just because I like our political processes

but because that’s the mechanism we have to fix whatever issues come up.

Government works. That’s the most liberal thing about me. If we continue to treat government as the problem instead of the solution, we’ll never be able to harness the power to fix whatever’s broken. We need to restore American enthusiasm for our civic processes, because it’s the only government we’ve got. Whether or not you like the people who are running it, we have to believe in the system of government. It sucks, but it’s better than all the others. I’d fix that. Also, pleated khakis and people putting blue cheese in their olives. Those are disgusting. ■

Who Is Sarah McDaniel and Why Are We Obsessed With Her?

Last October, Sarah McDaniel, a consummate Snapchat and Instagram user, skyrocketed to internet stardom when her striking appearance—we're talking about her different eye colors, the result of a hereditary condition called heterochromia iridum—garnered a lot of important "likes." Meteoric rises are often years in the making; for Sarah, becoming a sensation took milliseconds. News outlets around the world, from *The Mirror* in England to Univision in Mexico, took notice. Her online following swelled by thousands. The talent scouts at Guess wanted in. Then Grammy-winning überproducer and DJ Mark Ronson offered her a role in the music video for "Daffodils" (the second single off his album *Uptown Special*), shot by Theo Wenner. Wenner, the high-profile scion of the founder of the media company behind *Rolling Stone*, had just finished photographing Adele. When he met Sarah, he gave her a single

direction for the video's three-day shoot in the Bahamas: to be her supercasual self, as if she were on vacation. She nailed it.

Perhaps it's Sarah's deeply transfixing, star-making irises, but we want to wake up next to her every morning. Or maybe it's something more? Maybe it's her unapologetic attitude. Sarah is neither shy nor humble; her Instagram handle is @krotch, and her feed is a campy mix of perfectly squared selfies and biting, salacious wit. "My sense of humor is being an asshole," she says. In conversation she appears more genuine than any of the actresses peddling publicist-penned talking points on late-night TV. Sarah describes herself as "loud, weird and annoying," admits she didn't know about Wenner's storied past before they met and has zero qualms about posting a picture of herself going to town on a Chipotle burrito. "My agency gets upset about

it. They don't like my user name. They think I post raunchy stuff. They want me to post only salads and not have a personality. But my job as a model is to portray, to act. When I go online, it's to let people know who I am," Sarah says. "Imagine if you met a girl who was quiet and meek and didn't want to talk to you. How fun is that?" No fun at all, which is why we wanted Sarah and Wenner to team up again, this time in a Manhattan hotel, to capture the beautiful rawness of a 21st-century digitally connected, unfiltered woman who is making it all happen without letting anything go.

"The idea was to look at me from a boyfriend's perspective," Sarah says. "This is very intimate. I'm not even wearing makeup." When most of us are obsessively filtering, fluffing and faking it, Sarah's realness—or should we call it It girl-ness?—is enough to get us high. Put simply, it's addictive.

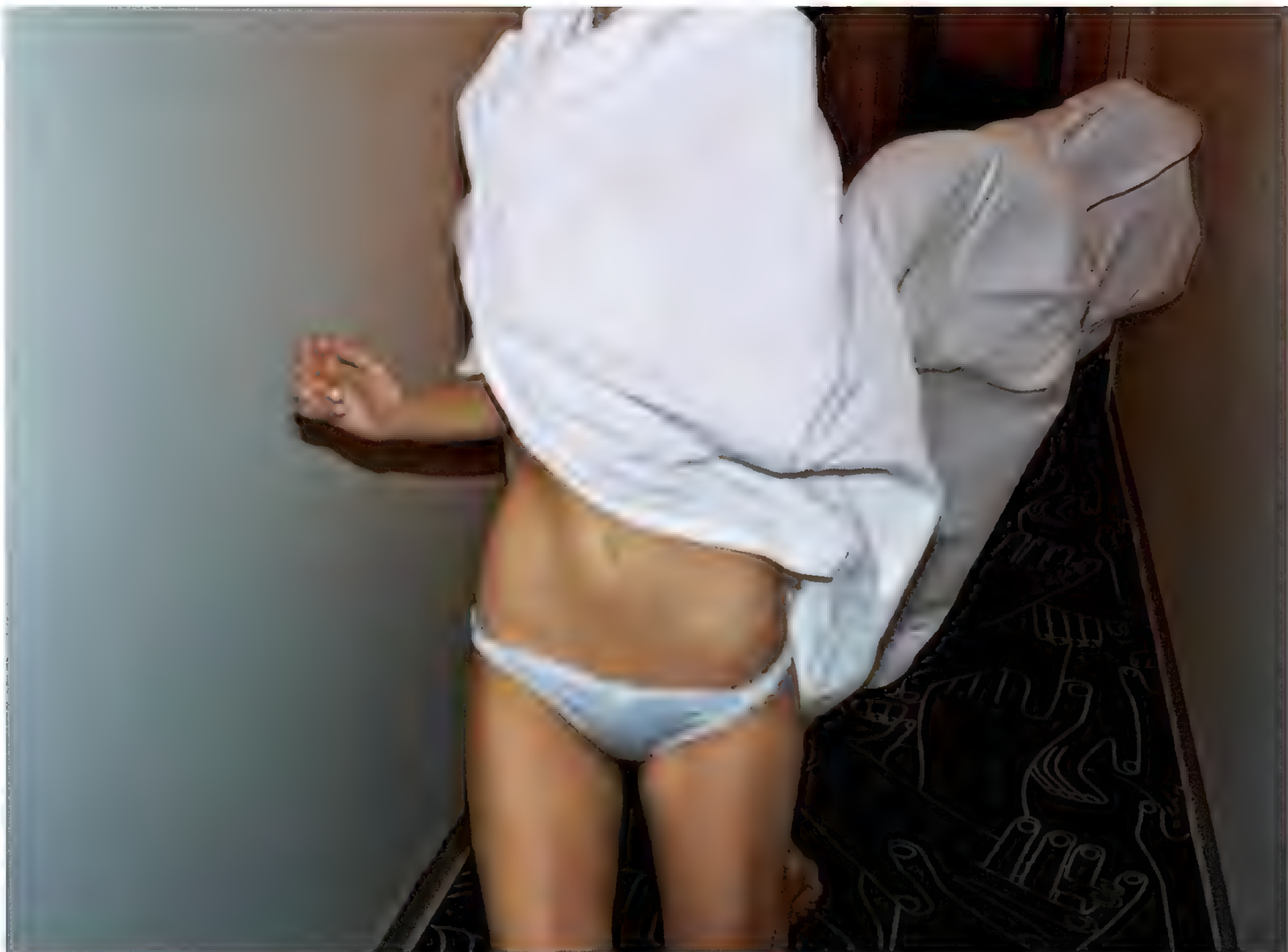
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **THEO WENNER**





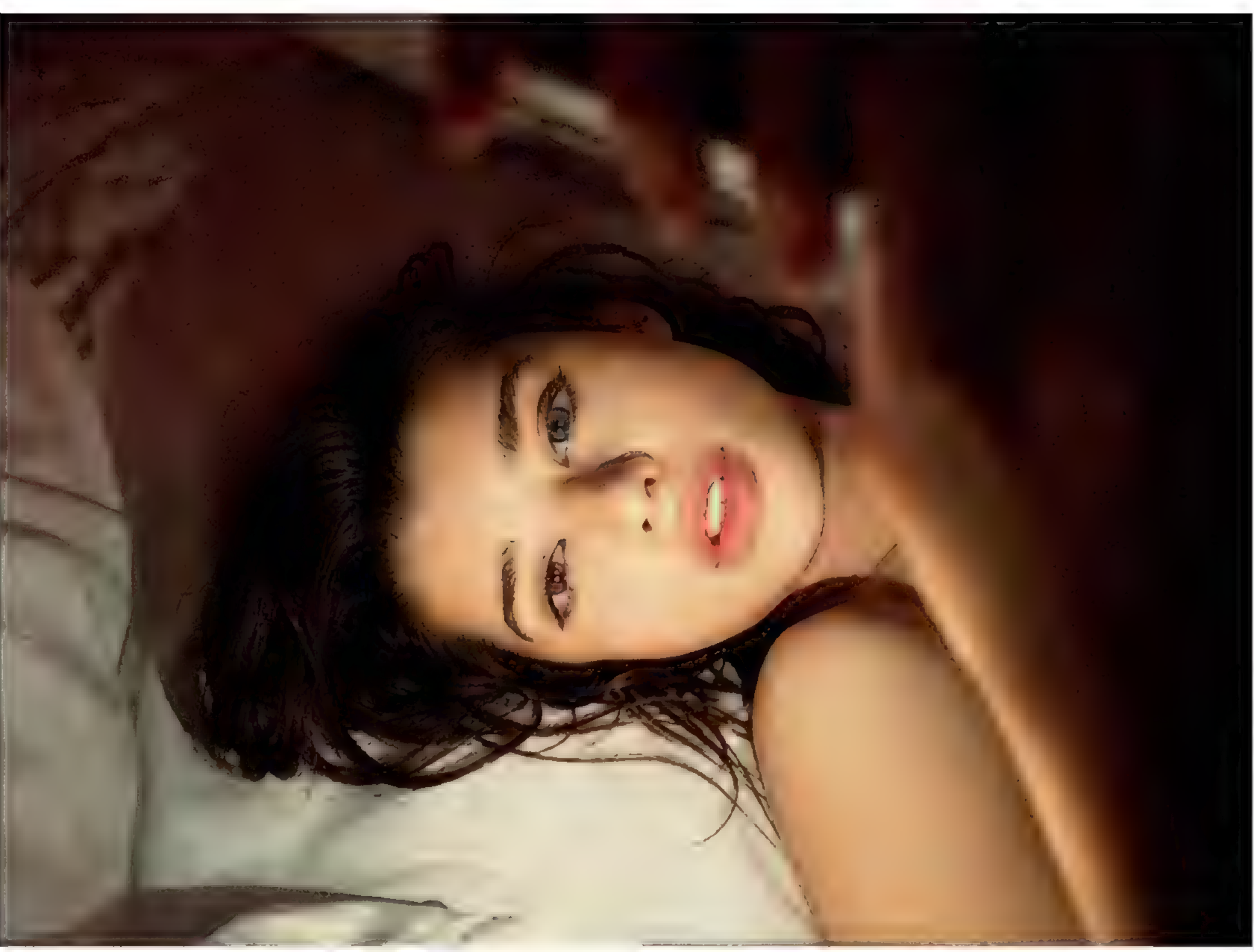
















MY DEPORTATION

*Javier Valadez was a crucial part of the Texas arts scene until the day he was deported.
This is a first-person account of his one-way trip to Mexico*





BY **JAVIER VALADEZ** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHANTAL ANDERSON**

It was still dark when they came for me. I hear that's what they do—sleaze up before dawn when you're too confused and disoriented to remember anything about warrants or lawyers or the rights you have and the rights you don't. Me? I was ass-naked when I answered the door. Their knocks were violent enough to rustle my two dogs awake and make them bark ferociously. It was the most panicked wake-up call I've ever received.

I cracked open the front door just enough to peek outside. On my stoop I saw four large men dressed head to toe in black, guns strapped at their waists. They asked my name and said they were looking for someone who lived at my address. I gave them a fake name, and that was perhaps my first mistake.

I assumed the men were local law enforcement canvassing the neighborhood for information on a midnight crime—you know, watchful officers stopping by to warn me. The day before, I'd dropped off my fiancée, Cassandra,

and our 20-month-old daughter, Sophia, at the Dallas/Fort Worth airport. They were heading to Saltillo, Mexico to visit my mother, a trip Cassandra insisted on making every six months or so to acquaint our daughter with my family, with whom I had more or less fallen out of touch. And so I was home alone, save for my dogs, and it was as if the men outside my door knew that. As their questions kept coming, my naivete faded. It became clear they were looking for me. My face grew numb. My legs shook. My balls shrank.

I told them I needed to put on some clothes before coming outside. I couldn't think what the police would want with me. Yeah, I was on probation after being booked a few years earlier for drunk driving and holding a third of a gram of coke, but I hadn't broken probation. There were no outstanding warrants for my arrest. I was following the rules, on good behavior.

I ran upstairs and called my stepfather. "Everything will be okay," he told me. Despite his

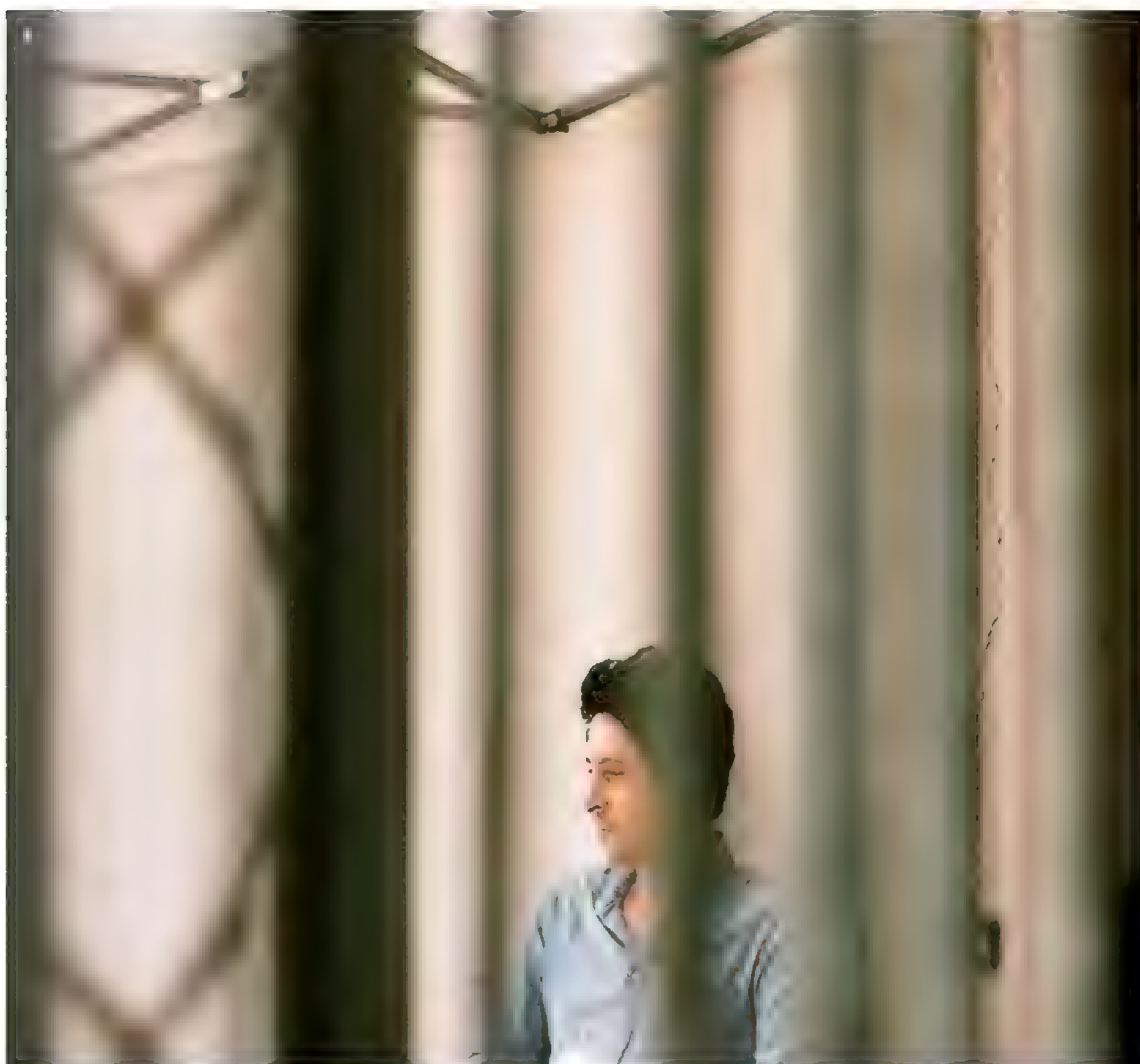
calmness, I felt terrified. Tears formed and my hands trembled. "Just do what they say," he said.

I was 26 and had already been arrested three times, once for drunk driving and twice for drugs, so I knew the drill. They'd probably take me to some overly air-conditioned cell in the county jail for questioning, so I dressed warmly. I also grabbed \$840 in cash for bail and phone calls. If they ended up cuffing me, I wanted to be prepared.

When I stepped outside I finally got a clear view of the men. Each wore a patch of the Texas flag on his uniform and had POLICE stitched across his chest, but none had a visible badge or ID. One handed me a document with the words *Operation Fugitive* printed along the top. It had all my information: my name, address, place of employment. I knew then the game was over. I told them I was in fact Javier Valadez.

"We're federal immigration agents," one of the men said. "We're arresting you for being in the country illegally."





1. Before being deported, Valadez, co-founder of a successful Dallas culture magazine, was considered one of the city's preeminent publishers. 2. Pages from the second issue of *THRWD*, the magazine Valadez launched in 2012. 3. A picture of Cassandra, now Valadez's wife, when she was eight months pregnant, taken in Austin.

I froze. The idea that these men were Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers never crossed my mind. I had lived in the United States since I was 12. I grew up around Dallas and graduated from high school there. I had attended the University of Texas and received my associate's degree from a community college. I'd created a successful arts and culture publication that had just been voted best magazine by the *Dallas Observer*. I paid my taxes. I spoke English.

As the men escorted me to a waiting SUV, I explained that I was on probation but was upholding the law. I told them I wasn't a criminal.

"You might have paid for your crimes to the state of Texas," one snarked, "but you still have to pay for your federal crimes to the United States." The streets were eerily silent. My neighbors were still asleep. I took another look at my house. It would be the last time I saw it.

...

My family moved to the United States from Monclova, Mexico in July 2001, after I'd graduated from elementary school. I was 12. I don't remember much prior to moving to Dallas,

except that we were making the move because my father could make better money working construction in Texas. On the nine-hour drive north, I sat in the back of our Ford Escort next to a box of my childhood belongings, knowing nothing about our new home. I remember feeling numb. "Don't look back, kids," my dad said to my sister and me. I never did.

My parents came into the States on a six-month tourist visa. This was before 9/11, when immigration laws were relatively loose. It was easy to get into the States then, and that's probably why my parents had no intention of adjusting our status after we settled. I could chalk it up to the fact that no one warned them of the consequences, but really, it was simple ignorance. They wanted my sister and me to assimilate quickly, so a month after our arrival my mother enrolled us in Reed Middle School in the Dallas suburb of Duncanville. I knew enough English to get by, but the school put me in an English as a second language class. I hated it. The other Spanish speakers in ESL were older and most were troublemakers who spent more time goofing around than studying. They relied

on the teachers to do their homework and took advantage of the language barrier. I wanted out, so I worked hard and studied obsessively. After a year, the school transferred me into the regular curriculum, where I finally got to sit side by side with the American kids. That's when I began to embrace my life in America.

The Mexican kids at my school were heavily influenced by American culture, and I became friends with them because of that. Together we made it a point to speak only English. We didn't want to be judged by the "cool" American kids or be excluded by them. We took up skateboarding, which was the first time I understood the American dream. My skateboard gave me a high I'd never felt before; it gave me real freedom. A group of us often ventured into downtown Dallas and skated into the night while listening to 1990s punk, rock and hip-hop. We'd ask strangers to buy us 40s from the 7-Eleven, and if the cops came, we'd scatter. It was thrilling. I felt like I was living in Harmony Korine's *Kids*. It was the first time I truly felt like an American teenager.

After I became fluent in English, it was



almost as if I weren't Mexican anymore. Most people assumed I was Jewish, French, Arabic or Caucasian. I made good marks in art classes, dated a blue-eyed blonde on the cheer squad and became president of the drafting club. No one questioned my ethnicity, let alone my immigration status. I forgot about it and stopped feeling like a foreigner. I belonged to the country I lived in. I was American.

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I wasn't well informed about the naturalization process because it was easy not to be. My mother gave birth to my younger sister at a Texas hospital, endowing her with birthright citizenship. My parents were able to buy a home and cars and have credit cards, all without having legitimate Social Security numbers. Capitalism doesn't care where you're from or to whom you're related. If everyone in the system works in his or her own self-interest, the law turns a blind eye.

That became all the more true in 2001 when Governor Rick Perry signed into law a provision allowing undocumented immigrant students to receive in-state tuition if they promised to apply for permanent status later. The only catch was you had to be a Texas resident for at least three years and have a Texas high school diploma. I qualified and attended the University of Texas, Arlington, where I studied petroleum engineering. I got a driver's license, a job and my own apartment, all without proper documentation. For years I thrived and enjoyed the promise of America, but in 2012, the law caught up with me—though it had nothing to do with my citizenship status.

My parents divorced in 2011. For the first time since moving to Texas, my dad couldn't find a steady job without documentation. This was at the height of the Great Recession, when the unemployment rate was 10 percent, so getting a job without a legitimate SSN or work permit was impossible. My father had gone from a well-paying construction job to a maintenance job at an apartment complex to being jobless. On top of that, my parents' mortgage was one of the thousands of predatory loans handed out by lenders during the housing bubble. Their interest rate skyrocketed and they struggled to pay their bills, further straining the family. It came to a head when my father packed up and headed

back to Mexico, leaving me with my mom and soon-to-be stepfather, who purchased our home directly from my dad. "Don't look back," he'd once told me, and I don't believe he did.

My dad and I had become best friends when things got rough. I made an effort to see him. Mexican men commonly avoid obvious affection; we were an exception. When he left for Mexico, his absence hit me hard. I broke off all communication with him and turned to pot and booze. I was depressed and wrapped myself in a sheath of hazy pleasure to distract from the pain. I tried to focus in school, but my smoking and drinking turned habitual. By May 2011, my abuse had gotten so bad I had no choice but to drop out of college, vacate my apartment and move back home.

I pretended I was fine, and that was enough to appease my mom. At one point she found marijuana in my room but ignored it. She should have confronted me. I should have asked for help. Instead I did nothing. In April 2012 I was arrested at Cedar Hill State Park on my way to meet friends at a campsite. The cops busted me carrying a fair amount of weed and a small amount of cocaine. I don't use coke—I was holding it for a friend—but, as they say, the dog never really eats the homework. By September of the same year, I was arrested twice more for marijuana possession and once for drunk driving. It was the end of the line. I had spiraled deeper and deeper into self-sabotage, maniacally snuffing out the light of my own dream. For the first time since I'd crossed the border at 12 years old, the law noticed me.

I was convicted of DWI and misdemeanor drug possession and put on two years' probation. The state sentenced me to random testing and substance-abuse counseling and installed a Breathalyzer in my car. My family, having spent thousands of dollars on my court fees, didn't think much of me. The all-American do-good narrative I aspired to had crumbled into dust.

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The first time I was released from the county jail for marijuana possession, I didn't call my family. I'd spent four days locked up, and the chilling solitude had forced me to stew in embarrassment and humiliation. I wasn't ready to face them. Instead I turned off my cell phone,

lit a cigarette and wandered downtown Dallas. I was aimless. Alone, I started to see the streets in a different way. This city was my home, but I had lost sight of how much it had given me. I reflected on my mistakes, desperate to atone. I knew I had talent, and I knew a lot of talented people—artists, writers and other creative folk. Dallas had so much bubbling artistic value and offered more than football, cheerleaders and honky-tonks. It could go head-to-head with San Antonio and Austin as the state's beating cultural heart. I knew this. Smart 20-somethings who'd grown up in Dallas knew this. And then, just like that, everything made sense.

I was working at a printing company and knew the ins and outs of publishing. I had access to photographers, designers, artists and writers. All I needed to do was assemble the right people in the right room and make them believe in this incredible idea I had: I wanted to create a new kind of culture magazine for Dallas dwellers, by Dallas dwellers. I wanted to give back to my city, but more than that, I wanted to jolt it with a radical current of new energy.

I knew I could afford to print the magazine in-house at my company, but my mind has always been more artistic than editorial. So I tapped my friend Lee Escobedo, who studied journalism, and he tapped his friends, and soon enough we had a devoted team of doers with a hell-yeah attitude. We decided to name our magazine *THRWD*, defined by us in the first issue as "another word for: cool, dope, cray cray, or fuck'd up." The first issue launched in late 2012 with a masthead that included an art director, an editor in chief, 12 contributors and me on board as creative director. "Dallas is our home. Staying local is our first priority," we wrote in the inaugural issue's manifesto. "Are you *THRWD* on life? I'm talking fucked-up on creativity, faded on expression? Good. That means you're alive. The simple act of reading this puts you on the first step to getting *THRWD*. Read it on the train, while taking a shit or after a long fuck."

We profiled local printmakers and bands on the rise. We covered everything from interracial dating and race relations to new restaurants and budding bars. We interviewed ethnically diverse painters, printed original poetry and quoted Susan Sontag and Tony Kushner. The

**IF EVERYONE IN THE SYSTEM WORKS
IN HIS OR HER OWN SELF-INTEREST,
THE LAW TURNS A BLIND EYE.**



magazine was a success. The local NPR affiliate described *THRWD* as a hub for “collaboration, cross-pollination and DIY culture.” We became recognized enough in Dallas that we celebrated our one-year anniversary by throwing a concert, *THRWD Fest*, which drew our “usual hip and knowledgeable crowd,” as described by *D Magazine*. In July 2014 I was named Dallas’s “avant-gardist publisher” and one of the city’s 100 leading creative entrepreneurs. Soon after, the *Dallas Observer* voted *THRWD* “best zine in the city.”

It was one of my proudest moments, foremost because it meant I’d escaped my darkness. I’d created something tangible, respected and beneficial to the city I loved. I felt I was paying my debt. Riding on those good vibes, I fell in love and became a father. I looked forward to marrying Cassandra and finally receiving citizenship. Life made sense again.

Six months later, ICE pounded on my front door.

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When I arrived at ICE’s field office in Dallas, the officers let me make three phone calls. I called my stepfather, my lawyer Robert Simmons and my employer. I couldn’t call my fiancée because she was in Mexico, but my stepfather said he would contact her. Again he assured me, “Everything will be okay.” My lawyer said it was strange they’d booked me when I had a clean probation record. “I have it under control,” he said. When I told my boss I couldn’t come to work that day, she made a joke. “I could have guessed by the caller ID,” she said. Everyone sounded calm, cheery even.

I waited for seven hours with the other men ICE had poached in the middle of the night before armed guards transported us via a 90-minute bus ride to the Johnson County Detention Center in Cleburne, Texas. There, we were taken to an isolated compound of four brick buildings. Like all government facilities, these hummed with fluorescent lighting and were cooled to bone-chilling temperatures. We were fed ham sandwiches and shown two videos. One warned us about sexual abuse among inmates. The other was a primer on navigating immigration court. When that video played, I saw hope in the eyes around me, but I felt nothing. In my mind, I didn’t belong there in the first place.

The other detainees were different from me. One kid was “celebrating” his 21st birthday. He told me how he’d gotten lost walking through the desert on his way to the States and had to drink his own piss to survive. A man from Honduras

told me he’d seen an Indian man die in the desert on his journey. The Indian hadn’t known how hard the walk would be and collapsed from exhaustion. His heart gave out soon after. Others had similar stories. Some worried their pregnant wives would be raped; others pretended to be married to strangers. The stories were shocking, but the tone of the men telling them said otherwise, as if it had all been normal, or at least expected when you enter the U.S. that way.

I met Nigerians, an Egyptian and someone from the Congo. They were all nice enough, but I didn’t meet anyone like me. I didn’t meet anyone who’d grown up in the States, attended a public university and started his own magazine. I met only desperate men, some of whom had been locked up for months and whose sacrifices seemed far greater than mine. After

I MADE SURE TO SPEAK ONLY ENGLISH. I WANTED THE GUARDS TO KNOW I DIDN’T BELONG THERE.

talking to enough of them, I discovered that most of us were on probation—and I realized that’s why I was among them.

In 2012 President Barack Obama authorized new ICE guidelines for alien detention that centered on criminal activity. Undocumented immigrants convicted of a felony or multiple misdemeanors moved up the chain and became prime targets for deportation, and I had three arrests under my belt. Good behavior is ignored, apparently, and state and local law enforcement were expected to work hand in hand with federal officers to identify illegals with a record. I’ve heard stories of ICE officers camping out at probation offices, waiting for people to come to their appointments so they could seize them on the spot. I think that’s how my record fell into the hands of ICE. In fact, our criminal records were so finely sewn into our identities at the detention center that upon arrival we were given color-coded jumpsuits. Those who wore red had

violent records. Those who wore green, as I did, had more than one misdemeanor conviction. It was a visual reminder that ICE considered us threats to our communities.

I spent my first days sleeping too much and trying to cope. I had too many questions and no answers from my lawyer, so to ease my stress I learned the routine. It was tedious and dehumanizing. You had to shit and shower in the open. Breakfast, which was usually watery grits or biscuits soaked in salty gravy, was served at four A.M. Lunch and dinner consisted of fried chicken mush, runny macaroni and cheese or shriveled hot dogs. Our sole beverage option was Kool-Aid dispensed from a five-gallon Igloo cooler; sometimes it was too sweet, other times it was sour. The kitchen staff had a sense of humor, though. They included a jalapeño pepper with every meal, under the assumption that every immigrant loves spicy food. Racism was alive and well within those walls.

Meals were measly and by the late evening bellies growled for more. Detainees with money bought ramen from the commissary, while the poorest made a powdery soup from water, Cheetos crumbs and left-over bread scraps. Every night the walls echoed with the sound of guys banging their ramen packets on the floor to crush the noodles and make room for hot water. I’ll never forget the plastic crinkling throughout the tank—what we called the jail cells.

Days went by, then weeks. The metal bed frames kinked my back, and the constant cacophony of for-

eign languages deafened me. As in high school, I made sure to speak only English. I wanted the guards to know I was different from the others, that I didn’t belong there. They heard the stories of every detainee—some hopeful, many hopeless—and witnessed the emotional breakdowns of those who didn’t make it back to the American wonderland. I wanted them to believe I was getting out. I was able to call my fiancée every day and night; I dreamed of her and my daughter rescuing me at dawn, the guards giving me a woeful apology and a slap on the back. I constantly reminded myself of my accomplishments so as not to be broken as I curled up in my green uniform.

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To my surprise, news of my arrest spread in Dallas. I didn’t want people to feel bad for me, but I knew my friends would help however they could. In less than two weeks, my friend Stephen Ketner galvanized the local creative

community and held a “Free Javi” fund-raising concert at the Free Man, a Creole lounge in Deep Ellum, Dallas’s go-to hood for entertainment. The concert sold BRING JAVI HOME T-shirts, raised \$4,000 and caught the attention of immigration activists and pro bono lawyers seeking a gold star on their CVs.

Local activists jumped on my story, wanting to use it as the springboard for a movement. I had no qualms about stepping into the spotlight, even if it exposed my criminal record, because I wanted people to feel the same injustice I felt. *The Dallas Morning News* spun my story into a broader feature on ICE’s predatory raids. On the day of my first trial, Dallas’s CW affiliate aired a story featuring my fiancée, my lawyer and Stephen Ketner. I watched it from the detention center’s rec room with my fellow detainees. For the first time since being handcuffed, I felt big. At that moment, my story wasn’t just a random headline amid the national white noise about immigration reform; it was the story of every man who sat beside me. I was proud of Cassandra for baring her emotions on camera. “Every time the door rings, [Sophia’s] like, ‘Dada? Dada?’ thinking it’s him,” Cassandra told the reporter. “It melts my heart.”

It was the first time I’d seen Sophia’s face in weeks. I cried. Seeing them both was a punch to the gut and made me even more anxious, angry and stir-crazy. It was incredible that my story had become so hot, but after seeing my daughter, all I wanted was a reunion.

After three weeks, my lawyer came to see me. I expected him to have some long-winded bureaucratic game plan, but my situation was more dire. He told me my convictions disqualified me from President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals initiative, which offers a reprieve to illegals brought to the States as children by their parents. DACA, enacted in 2012, had become a safety net for thousands, but my drug-possession charge made it a dead end. I had only two choices: stay in detention and fight the system, or leave the country voluntarily.

Under voluntary deportation, I would have to leave the country within a few days but wouldn’t be barred from coming back. Regular deportation usually comes with a 10-year ban, but leaving “voluntarily” doesn’t. Fighting the government, my lawyer said, would be a nightmare. At a minimum, it would involve finding a proxy to marry Cassandra immediately, convincing a judge to grant me bond and filing paperwork every few months to achieve a constantly changing legal status, from migrant to temporary resident to permanent resident.

My fiancée wanted to hire more lawyers and enlist activists to promote the cause. My

friends said I could be the face of immigration reform—the guy who went up against the biggest, baddest government in the West. Despite their enthusiasm, only one thing was certain: There was no guarantee a judge would go for any of it—in fact, my lawyer said I barely had a chance of winning. Have 15 seconds of fame ever swayed a government?

And so I made my decision.

On April 23, 2015, the day of my final hearing, 100 people volunteered to rally outside and pressure the judge for a deferral, but my lawyer asked them to back down. After I was denied bond, he gave the court my decision: voluntary deportation. The judge ordered me out of the country no later than April 30 and slammed his gavel. My life as an American was over.

...

Many people don’t know that ICE doesn’t give you an exact time for when it will haul your ass to the border. It makes coordinating your own eviction, from saying good-bye to family to fig-

uring out finances to finding a place to live on the other side, nearly impossible. Instead, without much warning, guards wake a select few at two A.M. and bus them to Dallas for processing. Since there was no knowing when it would be my turn, I devised a system. I told Cassandra I’d call her every morning by 11 A.M. If she didn’t hear from me, it meant my time was up.

My deportation did come with a silver lining. My mom and my sisters were living in Mexico, which meant I had somewhere to go. My oldest sister had moved to Monterrey after graduating from high school. She didn’t see much of a future for herself in the U.S. without papers and thought attending college in Mexico was more promising. Four years later, my mother, desperate to visit her, tried to purchase an American visa from someone who turned out to be an undercover ICE agent. It’s a standard ICE maneuver: luring undocumented immigrants into a sting operation with the offer of fake documents. Agents arrested her at a gas station near



Valadez was held by ICE for 26 days before being dumped on the U.S.-Mexico border in Laredo, Texas.

her home and held her for three months. She was finally deported on Thanksgiving 2013 and banned from reentering the country for 10 years.

I barely spoke to my mom after she was deported, and I became the sole remnant of my family's attempt at the American dream. My life was in America, she wasn't, and it was hard for me to align our two worlds. Now I was in the same boat she was, and she was ready for me to "come home." Cassandra said they seemed to have adjusted to living in Saltillo, based on what she saw during her visits with Sophia, but it was no doubt going to be an awkward homecoming.

April 30, 2015 felt a lifetime away. Every morning I woke to the sounds of guards clanging on bunks and inmates shuffling out of the tank. On April 28 I stayed up until two A.M., but the guards didn't come for me. When I woke eight hours later and went to call Cassandra, however, a guard yelled out my ID number. It was time. I ran to the phone and dialed, but the tank's door opened before the call connected. A guard began barking orders, so I waved over a detainee named Joseph, who spoke a little English, and told him to tell Cassandra what was happening. The door slammed in front of me and I stared through its small window for a sign. Joseph looked back at me and gave a thumbs-up.

Seventeen of us were collected that afternoon. The guards gave us back our civilian clothes and whatever cash we'd carried on our way in. I felt my identity return with every piece of clothing I put on. In the bathroom, I folded my \$840 into my sock. I was afraid someone across the border would be desperate enough to rob me for it.

We marched past the glass-walled tanks toward the building's exit, and I felt the hard stares of those still locked up. I threw a peace sign. I wanted to wish them luck in their battles.

The guards shackled our ankles and wrists to our waists and transported us to Dallas. There, we signed more paperwork. As always, I spoke only English. "Why are you here?" an officer asked, surprised. I couldn't do anything but laugh. At one P.M., they took us outside.

There it sat: our metal chariot, idling, ready to haul us away. It looked like a normal bus from the outside, but inside steel walls punched with tiny holes separated the cabin into three sec-

tions. The windows were horizontally barred and the seats were molded plastic. A festering open toilet at the back stunk up the entire bus.

An officer handed us bottled water and brown paper bags. Each bag contained three cookies, two bologna sandwiches and four peanut-butter crackers. This was supposed to hold us over on the eight-hour drive to the border, but because our wrists were chained to our waists, we could hardly eat. To get a sip of water, you had to slouch in your seat while your seatmate poured it into your mouth. I felt like a baby being fed a bottle.

The bus careered south on I-35 and passed my former office. All those years, I'd had no idea I was working two exits from ICE. A sharp pain shot through my body as I stared at the building where I'd realized my dreams. Everything I'd built out of my struggles began there. I paid my bills, rent and tuition because of that job. Now I was chained up like a dog. In a few blinks, the office disappeared behind us. I held back my tears. I couldn't cry in front of the other men.

We barreled toward Laredo, Texas, our final destination, blasting none other than the all-American red, white and blue beats of country twang. Some detainees talked about their plans on the other side. One guy from Jalisco said all he wanted was an ice-cold Corona and street tacos. Another said it had been 15 years since he last saw his grandparents, and he was excited to reunite with them. Few were that optimistic. Some had no family in Mexico and were being expelled to a country where they knew no one. An older guy planned to camp out for a few days before hiring a coyote to bring him back. "I can't leave my girlfriend alone," he said, laughing. I just stared at the barren landscape.

Laredo is one of the busiest land ports to Mexico and a hotbed of drug-war violence. We had to be dropped off before sunset for our own safety. I tracked our distance by the setting sun and passing city skylines. I watched Waco, Austin and San Antonio creep up and fade between long drags of flat fields and humble hills. When the sun began to kiss the horizon and the greasy fumes of taquerias wafted in from outside, I knew we were close. Sure enough, we arrived at sunset. There it was, the end of the road: Laredo fucking Texas. The grand finale of my American dream.

As the bus pulled into a parking lot along the Rio Grande, an officer handed us keys through the security door and told us to unlock each others' shackles. Outside, the fattest redneck I've ever seen chucked our bags from the bus onto the broken asphalt. It pissed me off. Those bags contained everything we owned, and this piece-of-shit guard treated them like trash.

Two Border Patrol agents escorted us across the bridge to the international border. It was their job to make sure we crossed the line and stayed there, and their eyes never left us. I stared at the man-made border before me, disillusioned. It was nothing more than a few thick strokes of white paint, so many inches wide, yet it held more power than the dreams of a thousand men. The Rio Grande rippled with gold and green as the sun took its last lick of the horizon. A great life, nearly 15 years' worth, replayed in my mind. I looked due north and snapped a picture on my phone, unsure if I would ever see that view again. Then I stepped into Mexico.

As I crossed the bridge, I took my money out of my sock and tucked a \$100 bill in my pocket. The rest of it went between my balls. Mexican authorities met us at the end of the bridge and handed out food sacks with crackers, a can of tuna, cookies and an orange. They knew some of us had little or no money. We filled out more paperwork, received temporary IDs and were given access to the facility's phones and bathrooms. After that, we were on our own.

My phone was still getting a U.S. signal, so I called my fiancée, stepfather and mother to tell them I'd made it to Mexico. They were relieved to know I was finally free. My mother planned to pick me up in Monterrey, but that was three hours away. I needed to find a way to get there.

An officer directed me to a van that would take us to a bus station at no charge. Seven of us hopped on, but the van had no seats or windows in the back, so we sat on the floor. It felt as though we were being smuggled into Mexico instead of out. The bus station didn't accept American currency, so I bought pesos off a kid selling them at an inflated exchange rate. When an American movie dubbed in Spanish played on the bus's TV, it hit me. I really was back in Mexico.

I STARED AT THE MAN-MADE BORDER BEFORE ME. IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A FEW THICK STROKES OF WHITE PAINT.



1. A photo of Valadez and Cassandra at their baby shower sits on a microwave in their new home. 2. Valadez had planned to apply for permanent residency after he married Cassandra. ICE thwarted those plans. 3. Saltillo, with a population of about 700,000, has been compared to Detroit because of its tough industrial job market.

I arrived in Monterrey around one A.M. My mother had yet to arrive, so I killed time in the depot, taking stock of the unfamiliar candies and snacks. Everything looked foreign to me. All of a sudden I heard three women screaming “Javi! Javi! Javi!” I turned around and saw my mom and sisters running toward me. They showered me with kisses, and I held my mom tight. It was our first embrace in years and the first time I felt safe since being arrested.

...

Saltillo is an industrial city with dozens of factories for mining, steel, concrete and auto manufacturing, including Chrysler. The city has a competitive job market, and my limited engineering studies aren’t enough to bank a well-paying job. Instead I’ve had to settle for a job I found on Craigslist, working at a law firm that handles Social Security-related cases. I work from home and get paid in U.S. dollars. The irony of staring at SSNs every day isn’t lost on me.

Cassandra moved to Saltillo with Sophia to be with me, and we finally got married. She got a job as an English teacher in a private school and found a support group for expat wives in

similar situations. Me? I refuse to dive into the Mexican culture and still read U.S. news every day. I hear that *THRWD* is still going strong. Being with family helps, but it also hasn’t let me fully feel the sadness of being expelled. Cassandra cries often. I feel guilty and tell her things could be worse. She hates it when I say that.

My presence hasn’t turned my family’s world upside down; they’ve all gone back to their routines and schedules. I feel like a foreigner in Saltillo. I returned to Mexico without my passport or birth certificate, so, as in the States, I’m living an undocumented life. In a way, I’m neither here nor there. Cassandra likes the outdoors, so we explore the desert and mountains. It gives her a breath of fresh air and time to forget about our struggles.

Our new jobs are not enough to secure a good future for Sophia, but I won’t give up. I’m a creator. I’m clever and resourceful. I like to fix things. It’s those characteristics that got me the life I wanted in Texas. My future may be fucked-up now, but I’m hell-bent on turning it around. I’ll never stop thinking about the U.S. It’s hard to separate myself from my

former life and the place that gave me everything. America is a fantastic place to accomplish anything you set your mind to, and I’m lucky to have lived the life I did. I’m thankful for the support of Dallas and my friends, who always saw me as one of their own.

We undocumented immigrants are obscure, yet we try to live our lives as normally as possible. Most of us just want to work hard, raise our family and be part of a community. I understand the consequences of the law, but the system is flawed. It’s unjust, discriminatory and, yeah, even racist. In the current minefield of state and federal laws, provisions and exclusions, a huge sector of America’s hard-working population is in limbo. One day we are welcomed and encouraged. We’re hired to build houses, clean bathrooms, babysit and cook in restaurants. The next day we’re in shackles, walking across the border with our tails between our legs. No money. No family. Only the shadows to welcome us home. It’s scary shit. For now, though, I’ll try my best to enjoy this “vacation” and keep working on myself. As my father once said, “Don’t look back.” ■



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELO PENNETTA

Dree Hemingway is packing for a two-week solo vacation in Costa Rica. In her carry-on bag go *The Circle* by Dave Eggers and *M Train* by Patti Smith. It's not surprising that Miss March—great-granddaughter of writer Ernest and daughter of actress Mariel—enjoys good lit. But this striking model and actress—who is as close as you can get to an American royal—wants to be clear about something. “I’ll break down my family in two seconds,” she says. “They’re my family. My last name isn’t anything but a wow factor. It says nothing about me.” She’s not being impudent. Dree has charted her own way, winning the Robert Altman Award at the Film Independent Spirit Awards for her role in Sean Baker’s *Starlet*, validating that yes, she has sizable talent. She’ll next act alongside Pamela Anderson in the indie film *The People Garden*, as well as with Chris O’Dowd in *Love After Love*. “Everything in my life is grounded in feeling,” she says. “The only thing you can do that’s really fucking beautiful is to own yourself.” This idea is what attracted Dree to PLAYBOY. She elaborates: “My pictorial captures all of me—the sexy Dree, the childlike Dree, the funny Dree, the tomboy, the Lolita.” It’s a big moment for a woman who has been both buoyed and buried by expectations. Which brings us back to her solo adventures—and her books. “It’s important to be with yourself,” she says. “We forget how to do that. We forget that it’s okay to live without validation. Don’t be afraid to fuck up and create and embarrass yourself. Put down your phone. Get back into reading. Feel something. That’s the only thing I want out of this.”









HAIR BY ESTHER LANGHAM FOR ART + COMMERCE. MAKEUP BY LISA HOUGHTON FOR TIM HOWARD MANAGEMENT. STYLING BY BETH FENTON FOR TIM HOWARD MANAGEMENT









D R E E H E M I N G W A Y



AGE: 28 **BIRTHPLACE:** Sun Valley, Idaho **CURRENT CITY:** East Village, New York

MY PATH TO PLAYBOY

PLAYBOY's images were so iconic in the 1960s, beyond anything else going on at the time. That's the dream for me, to be a part of that, because so many publications, especially in fashion, throw out the same exact story. There's nothing to compare this next chapter to. Not to mention, my mother posed for PLAYBOY years ago.

THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT ME

I once heard that people thought I was wild and crazy, which is funny. I wear my heart on my sleeve and don't listen to what other people think about me. But with this pictorial I do want people to see me in a different way than they have.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY ME A DRINK

All I drink is tequila.

MY FAVORITE PART OF NEW YORK

Walking all over the city while listening to music. Music is my therapy. Sometimes I'll walk across the Williamsburg Bridge to Brooklyn for no reason. I'll walk for hours.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO WATCH ANY FILM THIS YEAR, WATCH THIS

Jodorowsky's *Dune*, a documentary about Alejandro Jodorowsky's failed effort to make *Dune*. He's an avant-garde director whose influence can be seen in the work of everyone from George Lucas to Ridley Scott. Also, please watch *The Holy Mountain*. It's the most insane movie ever.

MY BEST KISS

I've always wanted that kiss at the water fountain in *Great Expectations*. It's the best kiss I never had.

MY MOST OVERPLAYED TRACK

I overplay a lot of alt-J.

IF I COULD PLAY ANY ROLE

Juliet, but only in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*.

THE APEX OF MY CAREER SO FAR

I am more proud of *Starlet* than almost anything else I've done. Director Sean Baker is incredible. He has a peculiar mind, and he just rolls with it. Hopefully I'll be able to work with him again—actually, I know I will.













Exhibit A



Exhibit B



Exhibit C



Exhibit D



Modern Sexuality: *A Case Study*

BY **BRET EASTON ELLIS**

I suppose it was only a matter of time before PLAYBOY decided to stop running nude photos, but now that it's happening it's still a reminder of how far we've evolved—or devolved, some may argue—in terms of our notions about female nudity and how sexual liberation is portrayed in the culture. For a generation of boomer men, PLAYBOY was a liberator, and certainly for me as a member of Gen X, finding my father's stash of PLAYBOYS in the bottom cabinet of his nightstand was my gateway to the world of nudity and sexual imagery. Despite my preferences, the nudity in PLAYBOY was fascinating because there was nothing to compare it to; the illustrations in the copy of *The Joy of Sex* my parents kept hidden in their closet were powerfully erotic, but they were only drawings. The photographs in PLAYBOY were tactile and alive with the color of flesh, and sometimes nude men appeared in the layouts (merely decorative and never the main attraction) and in the stills from the annual *Sex in Cinema* rundown. PLAYBOY and, later, other magazines were my introduction to the idea of the male gaze as I lay on the green shag carpet next to the water bed in the groovy San Fernando Valley of the mid-1970s.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY CRANNA

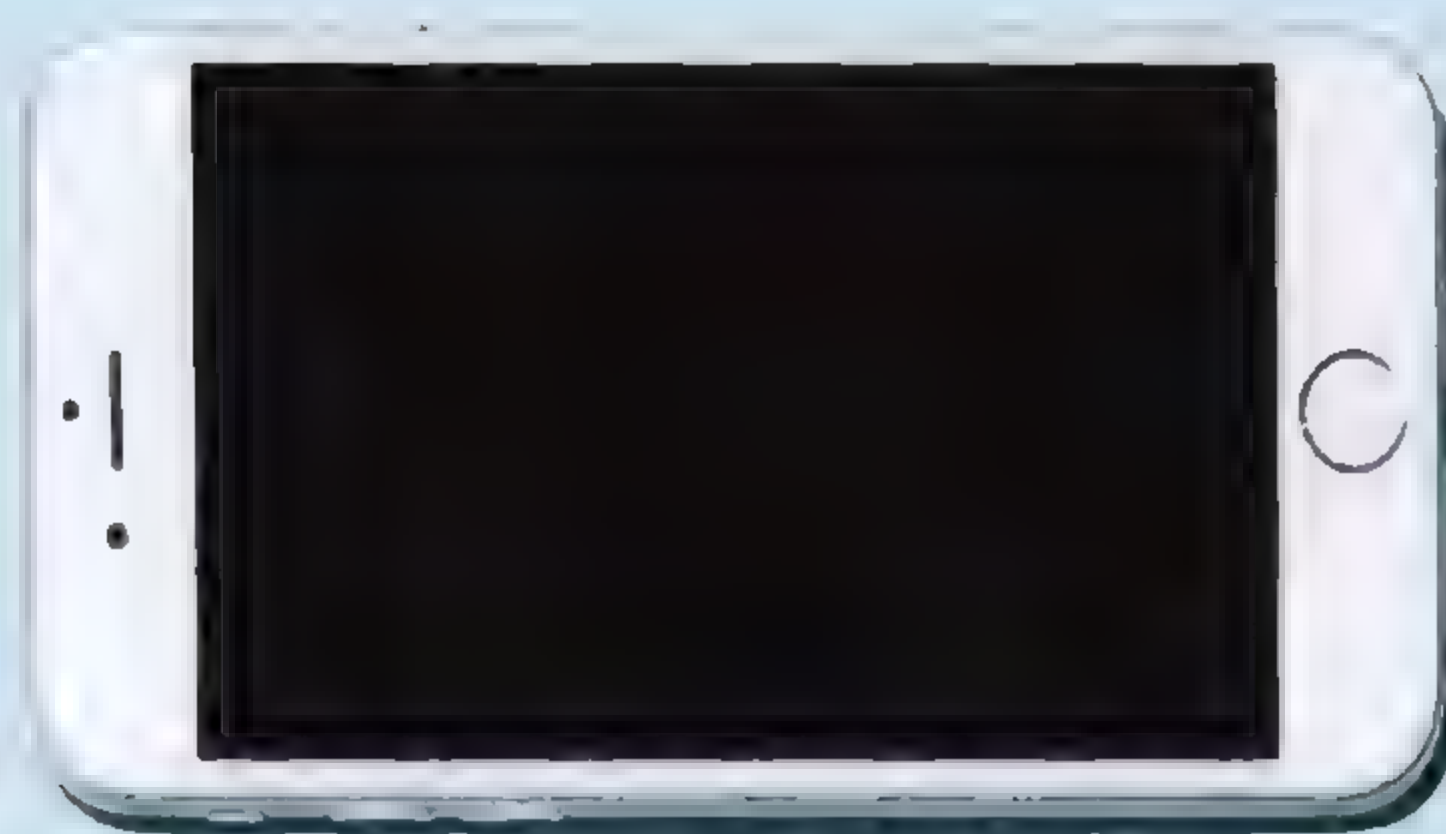


Exhibit E

As 1970s kids we had no helicopter parents—we navigated the world more or less alone, our explorations unaided by parental authority. In fact, my parents and the parents of my friends seem, in retrospect, incredibly permissive in comparison with today's parents, who document their kids' every move on Facebook, keep them in safe spaces and award them ribbons, trophies and gold stars just for *trying*. Our parents were not around all that much, or more accurately, they left us to our own devices.

That meant our parents were fairly lenient about the entertainment we consumed. Sometimes R-rated movies were fine and sometimes they weren't, depending on what they contained and how far they went. This laissez-faire attitude about content would not be acceptable for today's snowflake kids, but in the 1970s it was not unusual for an 11- or 12-year-old to have seen multiple screenings of *The Omen* in the summer of 1976 (brought in by a friend's older sibling) or *Saturday Night Fever* in the early winter of 1978 (my mom took me because she had a crush on Travolta) or to

listen to the racy original cast recording of *A Chorus Line* or flip through Jacqueline Susann and Harold Robbins novels or hear adults openly talk about drugs or watch sketches about people doing cocaine on *Saturday Night Live* or be drawn to the allure of disco culture and unironic horror movies. We consumed all this, and nothing ever triggered us. We never freaked, even though the darkness and the bad mood of the era were everywhere. In the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, pessimism was the national language—pessimism as a badge of hipness and cool. And in a pre-AIDS society, sexuality was discussed casually, without anxiety or menace. The body was free of all signifiers except pleasure. There was no fear or dread in sexual imagery. It was, I've increasingly realized as I've gotten older, an incredibly innocent time even though we decidedly felt it wasn't as we were living through it.

It was an era when magazines were the only place to find sustained images of nudity. There was nudity in American movies in the 1970s, but you had to first watch the movie on cable and then *time* it in order to catch the nudity

or soft-core sex scene you wanted to watch again when you were, um, alone. (This happened many times with me and the sex scene between Diane Keaton and Richard Gere in *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*.) We were a long way from the advent of the DVR, and VHS cassettes were not yet ubiquitous. Porn was still shown in theaters. The only way you could see images of naked people was by getting your hands on a magazine, and for many boys and girls the portal into the world of nudity was PLAYBOY. It's hard to remember in this era of nude selfies, porn spam and phones with every kind of sex act available on them within seconds that nudity was still taboo, a secret thing, something private, and that pictures with posed models were actually *exciting*. They raised the temperature; they got things going. These photos were our introduction to a deeper world of actual sexuality.

I saw my first pornographic film in ninth grade when a wealthy friend who lived in Bel Air had a sleepover. It felt incredibly taboo, and even though I knew it was terrible porn—unattractive performers, poorly shot—it still



offered a jolt. I understood I had crossed into another world with no looking back. As southern California kids, it wasn't until we were mobile with cars at 15 and 16 that we began to obtain and trade cassettes like contraband. I use that word because at a certain point the availability was so fraught with difficulty and there were so many impasses that the films were still surprisingly hard to come by. Our needs demanded an incredible amount of sheer will and planning, but the testosterone-crazed energy of adolescent-male sexuality aided us in getting what we desired. Added note: In its own way the hunt was part of the fun.

Of course, some 1970s feminists complained about PLAYBOY and porn in general. As males, we were confused: What was wrong with looking at beautiful women? Or beautiful men? What was wrong with the gender-based instinct to stare and covet? Why shouldn't this be made more easily available to horny boys? And what was wrong with the idea of the male gaze? No ideology was going to change these basic facts ingrained by biological imperatives. For example, we learned that a man's orgasm is a very different thing from a woman's orgasm, so, like, *what's up?* Why should we be turning away from our maleness? This is a question we still ask today. My male friends often wondered, *Who is empowered here?* "It's certainly not me. I'm staring at this beautiful woman I desperately want and will probably never meet"—which intensified the fantasy of it all. It left a slight sense of punishment and disdain overlaying the enjoyment, which probably added to the experience. Doesn't it always?

In retrospect the 1970s feminist reaction to PLAYBOY seemed unfair to us because a man's options pre-internet were so severely limited, especially if he were given only one or two issues of a *magazine* per month as a sexual aid. To add criticism to our desires seemed cruel. Today the idea of actually going to a store and renting or buying porn and having that as your only go-to source for a month is unthinkable. And yet, in a world now long gone, that's how many men obtained sexual images. Because they were rare, we imbued them with a deeper meaning and made them more powerful than perhaps they actually were. Later, DVDs led to the incredible array of pornography on the internet, and I marveled at the amount of choice that was so effortlessly available.

And yet, this availability changed my relationship to nudity: It made it more commonplace. It felt less exciting, like ordering a book from Amazon instead of walking to a bookstore and browsing for an hour, or purchasing shoes from Zappos instead of heading to the mall and trying them on while interacting with a salesperson. And I think this cooling of excitement in all levels of the culture has to do with the disappearing notion of *investment*.

When you went to a record store or a bookstore or a movie theater or a newsstand, you took the time to place a certain amount of investment in buying the record or purchasing the book or watching the movie or hunting for sexual images. This investment was involved in a deeper attempt to connect with the album cover, the book jacket, the film, the porn. You had a rooting interest in enjoying the experience because you had invested effort and time, and you were more likely to find gratification because of this. The idea of dismissing a book after five pages on your Kindle, turning off a Netflix movie in its first 10 minutes or not listening all the way through a track on iTunes was not an option, because of your investment. Why would you do that when you had driven to a theater, a bookstore, Tower Records, the newsstand on Laurel Canyon Boulevard?

But what happens when sexuality is automatically available to us without investment? When a book or a record or a movie or a naked woman or five naked women or a naked woman engaged in a gangbang with five hung men is only a click away? When

buy or rent porn in person and feeling the attendant's (imagined) judgment and shame, just as the idea of a hookup app makes things easier and more efficient for some people. But what does this efficiency do to the idea of investing in your desires and your fantasies and your ultimate gratification? When everything is just a tap away on your screen, what does this do to the idea of actually working hard and procuring something through effort? The pulse-pounding excitement—the suspense!—of the investment you once put into seeing erotic imagery is now replaced by a ho-hum and easy accessibility. This has changed our relationship to nudity and our expectations for it, as well as for watching sexual acts. There was a romance to nudity in the early days of PLAYBOY, an ardency, an otherness and a specialness that are missing in the age of Tinder, with its speedy and Darwinian confirmation that men like only conventionally hot women and hunt for sex everywhere at all times. By comparison PLAYBOY seems like a gentle and soothing fantasy.

So some things change and some things don't change—even though liberal and ideological sentimental narratives wish they would. Nudity doesn't mean as much as it used to, because it is ubiquitous in the culture now. Young women and men celebrating their bodies are free of the insecurities of previous generations. This could be seen as healthy self-empowerment or as an example of corporate narcissistic flaunting for Instagram.

PLAYBOY has evolved. There is no reason to be a nostalgist about this, because in some

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SEXUALITY IS AVAILABLE TO US WITHOUT INVESTMENT?

nudity and the idea of sexual gratification become so commonplace that you can instantly hook up with someone and see naked pics of that incoming sex partner within seconds, where the casualness of the exchange is on the same wavelength as ordering a book online or downloading a new movie on Apple TV? The lack of investment renders everything on the same level: Everything is available to you with no effort or dramatic narrative, so who cares if you like it or you don't?

I don't miss the awkwardness of having to

ways we're much better off. The opportunity for sexual gratification is now a tap away for many people, and nudity is no big deal. PLAYBOY helped shape this moment. PLAYBOY began these conversations—a revolution—so many years ago with its images of beautiful naked women. And even without nudity each month, we continue to conform to one aspect of it that will never go away: Fashions change, as does the way we access images of nudity and sex, but beauty, no matter in what form or on what screen, will always be idealized. ■



THE

A writer remembers a wild night of drinking with a

MORNING

woman—and the sexual awakening that followed

AFTER



No one dissects the life of the modern man like Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgaard. With uninhibited honesty his staggering six-volume autobiography scrutinizes women, sex, drinking, music, being a son, being a father and the workings of the male mind. Nothing is off limits, including his inexperience with masturbation. In this exclusive excerpt from *My Struggle: Book Five*, published this month by Archipelago Books, Knausgaard goes carousing on a college night out and soon discovers erotic inspiration.

BY **KARL OVE
KNAUSGAARD**

After lessons on Friday we went out. Hovland and Fosse took us on their obviously well-worn path to Wesselstuen. It was a great place, the tables were covered with white cloths, and as soon as we sat down a waiter in a white shirt and black apron came over to take our orders. I hadn't experienced that before. Our mood was nice and relaxed, the week was over, I was happy, there were eight of us carefully selected students sitting round the table with Ragnar Hovland,

already a legend in student circles, at least in Bergen, and Jon Fosse, one of the most important young post-modern writers in the country, who had also received good reviews in Sweden. I hadn't spoken to them privately yet, but now I was sitting next to Hovland, and when the beer arrived and I'd had a swig, I seized the opportunity.

"I've heard you like the Cramps."

"Oh?" he said. "Where have you heard such malicious gossip?"

"A friend told me. Is it true? Are you interested in music?"

"Yes, I am," he said. "And I do like the Cramps. So, yes.... Say hi to your friend and tell him he's right."

He smiled, but there was no eye contact.

"Did he mention any other bands I liked?"

"No, just the Cramps."

"Do you like the Cramps then?"

"Ye-es. They're pretty good," I said. "But the music I listen to most at the moment is Prefab Sprout. Have you heard their latest? *From Langley Park to Memphis*?"

"Certainly have, although *Steve McQueen* is still my favorite."

Björg said something to him from across the table, and he leaned over to her with a polite expression on his face. Jon Fosse sat beside her and chatted to Knut. His texts had been the last ones we went through, and he was still full of it, I could see that. He wrote poems, and they were remarkably short, often only two or three lines,

sometimes only two words beside each other. I didn't grasp what they were about, but there was something brutal about them, and you wouldn't believe that when you saw him sitting there smiling and laughing; his presence was almost as friendly as his poems were short. He was garrulous as well. So personality wasn't the reason.

I put my empty beer glass down on the table in front of me and wanted another, but I didn't dare call over the waiter, so I had to wait until someone else ordered.

Petra and Trude sat beside me chatting. It was as if they knew each other from before. Petra suddenly seemed very open, while Trude had completely lost her stern, concentrated demeanor; now she had a girlish air, as though a burden had been lifted from her shoulders.

Although I couldn't really claim to know any of the other students, I had seen enough of them to form an impression of their characters, and even though these didn't necessarily coincide with their texts, except in the case of Björg and Else Karin, who both wrote the way they looked, I felt pretty sure I knew who they were. The exception was Petra. She was a mystery. Sometimes she would sit quietly staring down at the desk, with no presence in the room at all; it was like she was gnawing at her insides, I thought then, for despite not moving and despite her eyes being fixed on the same point, there was still an aggression about her. She was gnawing at herself, that was the feeling I had. When she eventually looked up there was always an ironic smile playing on her lips. Her comments were usually ironic, and not infrequently merciless, though somehow correct, albeit exaggerated. When she was enthusiastic this could vanish; her laughter might then become heartfelt, childish even, and her eyes, which so often smouldered, sparkled. Her texts were like her, I thought, as she read them, just as spiky and grudging as she was herself, at times clumsy and inelegant, but always full of bite and force, invariably ironic, though not

without passion even so.

Trude got up and walked across the room. Petra turned to me.

"Aren't you going to ask me what bands I like?" she said with a smile, but the eyes she fixed on me were dark and mocking.

"I could," I said. "What bands do you like?"

"Do you imagine I care about boys' room banter?" she said.

"How should I know?" I said.

"Do I look like that type of girl?"

"In fact, you do," I said. "The leather jacket and everything."

She laughed.

"Apart from the stupid names and all the clichés and the lack of psychological insight, I quite liked what you wrote," she said.

"There's nothing left to like," I said.

"Yes, there is," she said. "Don't let what others say upset you. It's nothing, just words. Look at those two," she said, motioning toward our teachers. "They're wallowing in our admiration. Look at Jon now. And look at Knut lapping it up."

"First of all, I'm not upset. Second of all, Jon Fosse is a good writer."

"Oh really? Have you read any of his stuff?"

"A little. I bought his latest novel on Wednesday."

"*Blood. The Stone Is*," she said in a deep Vestland voice, fixing me with her eyes. Then she laughed that heart-felt bubbling laugh of hers, which was abruptly cut short. "Ayyayyay, there's so much posturing!" she said.

"But not in the stuff you write?" I said.

"I've come here to learn," she said.

"I have to suck as much out of them as I can."

The waiter came over to our table. I raised my finger. Petra did the same; at first I thought she was taking the mickey out of me but then realized she wanted a beer too. Trude came back, Petra turned to her, and I leaned across the table to catch Jon Fosse's attention.

"Do you know Jan Kjærstad?" I said.

"Yes, a bit. We're colleagues."

"Do you consider yourself a postmodernist as well?"

"No, I'm probably more of a modernist. At least compared with Jan."

"Yes," I said.

He looked down at the table, seemed to discover his beer and took a long draft.

"What do you think of the course so far?" he said.

Was he asking me?

I flushed.

"It's been good," I said. "I feel I've learned a lot in a short time."

"Nice to hear," he said. "We haven't done much teaching, Ragnar and I. It's almost as new to us as it is to you."

"Yes," I said.

I knew I ought to say something. I suddenly found myself at the beginning of a conversation, but I didn't know what to say, and after the silence between us had lasted several seconds, he looked away, his attention was caught by someone else, whereupon I got up and went to the bathroom, which was behind the door at the other end of the room. There was a man peeing in the urinal; I knew I wouldn't be able to perform with him standing there, so I waited for the cubicle to become vacant, which happened the very next moment. There was some toilet paper on the floor tiles, wet with urine or water. The smell was rank and I breathed through my nose as I peed. Out-

I FELT PRETTY SURE I KNEW WHO THEY WERE. THE EXCEPTION WAS PETRA. SHE WAS A MYSTERY.

side the cubicle I heard water rush into the sinks. Immediately afterward, the hand drier roared. I flushed and went out, just as the two men left through the door, while another older man with a huge gut and a ruddy Bergen face came in. Although the toilet was a mess, with the floor wet and dirty and the smell vile, it still had the same solemnity as the restaurant outside with its white tablecloths and aproned waiters. No doubt it had something to do with its age: Both the tiles and the urinals came from a different era. I rinsed my hands under the tap and looked at my reflection in the mirror, which bore no resemblance to the inferiority I felt inside. The man positioned himself, legs apart, by the urinal. I thrust my hands under the current of hot air, turned them over a few times and went back to the table, where there was another beer waiting for me.

When it was finished and I had started on the next, slowly my timidity began to ease; in

its place came something soft and gentle and I no longer felt I was on the margins of the conversation, on the margins of the group, but in the center. I sat chatting first with one person, then with another, and when I went to the toilet now it was as though I took the whole table there with me, they existed in my head, a whirl of faces and voices, opinions and attitudes, laughter and giggles, and when some began to pack up and go home I didn't notice at first, it happened on the extreme periphery and didn't matter, the chatting and drinking carried on, but then first Jon Fosse got up, followed by Ragnar Hovland, and it was terrible, we were nothing without them.

"Have another one!" I said. "It's not so late. And it's Saturday tomorrow."

But they were adamant, they were going home, and after they had gone the urge to leave spread, and even though I asked each and every one of them to stay a bit longer the table was soon empty, apart from Petra and me.

"You're not going to go as well, are you?" I said.

"Soon," she said. "I live quite a way out of town, so I have to catch the bus."

"You can crash at my place," I said. "I live up in Sandviken. There's a sofa you can sleep on."

"Are you that keen to keep drinking?" she laughed. "Where shall we go then? We can't stay here any longer."

"Café Opera?" I suggested.

"Sounds good," she said.

Outside, it was lighter than I had expected; the remnants of the summer night's luster had blanched the sky above us as we ascended the hill toward the theater, past the row of taxis, the ocher glow from the

streetlamps as if drawn across the wet cobblestones, the rain pelting down. Petra was carrying her black leather bag and although I didn't look at her I knew her expression was serious and dogged, her movements rigid and awkward. She was like a polecat: She bit the hands of those who helped her.

At Café Opera there were many vacant tables, we went up to the first floor, beside a window. I got us two beers, she drank almost half hers in one swig, wiped her lips with the back of her hand. I searched my brain for something to say, but found nothing, and drank almost half mine in one swig too.

Five minutes passed.

"What did you actually do in northern Norway?" she said out of the blue but in a matter-of-fact way, as though we had been chatting for ages, while staring into the nearly empty beer glass she was nursing in front of her.



The author outside his home in Ystad, Sweden.

"I was a teacher," I said.

"I know that," she said. "But what made you decide to do that? What did you hope to achieve?"

"I don't know," I said. "It just happened. The idea was to do some writing up there, I suppose."

"It's a strange notion, looking for work in northern Norway so you can write."

"Yes, maybe it is."

She went to get some beer. I looked around me; soon the place would be full. She had rested her elbow on the bar, held up a hundred-krone note, in front of her one of the barmen was pouring a beer. Her lips slid over her teeth as she knitted her brow. On one of the first days she told me she had changed her name. Her surname, I assumed, but no, she had changed her first name. It had been something like Anne or Hilde, one of the most common girls' names, and I had thought a lot about Petra rejecting her first name, because personally I was so attached to mine, changing it was inconceivable, in a way everything would change if I did. But she had done it.

Mom had changed her name, but that was to

Dad's surname, it was a convention, and when she changed it again, it was back to her maiden name. Dad had also changed his name, that was more unusual, but he had changed his surname, not his first name, which was him.

She walked across the floor, half a liter in each hand, and sat down.

"Who do you think will make it?" she said.

"What do you mean?"

"In class, at school."

I didn't care much for her choice of word, I preferred *academy*, but I said nothing.

"I don't know," I said.

"I said think. Of course you don't know."

"I liked what you wrote."

"Flattery will get you nowhere."

"It's true."

"Knut: nothing to say. Trude: posturing. Else Karin: housewife's prose. Kjetil: childish. Bjørg: boring. Nina: good. She's repressed, but she writes well."

She laughed and slyly glanced up at me.

"What about me?" I said.

"You," she snorted. "You understand nothing about yourself and you have no idea what you're doing."

"Do you know what you're doing?"

"No, but at least I know I don't know," she said and laughed again. "And you're a bit girlie. But you've got big strong hands, so that makes up for it."

I looked away, my insides on fire.

"I've always had a wicked tongue on me," she said.

I took some long swigs of the beer and scanned the room.

"You weren't offended by that little gibe, were you?" she said with a giggle. "I could say far worse things about you if I wanted."

"Please don't," I said.

"You take yourself too seriously as well. But that's your age. It's not your fault."

And what about you then! I felt like saying. What makes you think you're so damn good? And if I'm girlie, you're butch. You look like a man when you walk!

I said nothing though, and slowly but surely the fire subsided, not least because I was beginning to get seriously drunk and approaching the point where nothing meant anything anymore, or to be more accurate, when everything meant the same.

A couple more beers and I would be there.

In the room, between all the occupied tables, strode a familiar figure. It was Morten, wearing his red leather jacket and carrying a light brown backpack on his back and a folded umbrella in his hand, the long one I had seen before. When he spotted me his face lit up and he rushed at full speed across to our table, tall and lanky, his hair spiky and glistening with gel.

"Hi there!" he grinned. "Out drinking, are you?"

"Yes," I said. "This is Petra. Petra, this is Morten."

"Hi," Morten said.

Petra gave him a once-over and nodded, then turned and looked the other way.

"We've been out with the academy," I said. "The others went home early."

"Thought writers were on the booze 24/7," he said. "I've been in the reading room until now. I don't know how this is going to work out. I don't understand a thing! Not a thing!"

He laughed and looked around.

"Actually I'm on my way home. Just popped by to see if there was anyone I knew. But I'll tell you one thing: I admire you writers-to-be."

He looked at me seriously for a moment.

"Well, I'm off," he said. "See you!"

When he had rounded the corner by the bar I told Petra he was my neighbor. She nodded casually, drank the rest of her beer and got up.

"I'll be off now," she said. "There's a bus in 15 minutes."

She lifted her jacket from the back of the chair, clenched her fist and put it in the sleeve.

"Weren't you going to sleep at my place? It's not a problem, you know."

"No, I'm going home. But I might take you up on your offer another time," she said. "Bye."

So, with her hand around her bag and a steadfast gaze ahead she walked toward the staircase. I didn't know anyone else there, but sat for a little longer, in case someone turned up, but then being on my own began to prey on my mind and I put on my raincoat, grabbed my bag and went out into the blustery night.

I woke up at around 11 to rattling and banging inside the wall. I sat up and looked around. What was that noise? Then I realized and slumped back into bed. The mailboxes were on the other side of the wall, but so far I hadn't slept long enough to know what it sounded like when the postman came.

Above me someone was walking around singing.

But the room, wasn't it remarkably light?

I got up and lifted the curtain.

The sun was shining.

I got dressed, went over to the shop and bought some milk, rolls and today's papers. When I returned I opened the mailbox. Apart from two bills that had been sent on to me there were two parcel-delivery cards. I hurried to the post office and was given two fat parcels, which I opened with the scissors in the kitchen. Shakespeare's collected works, T.S. Eliot's collected poems and plays, Oscar Wilde's collected works and a book with photos of naked women.

I sat down on my bed to flick through it, trembling with excitement. No, they weren't completely naked, many of them were wearing high heels and one had a blouse hanging open around her slim tanned upper body.

I put down the book and had breakfast while reading the three papers I had bought. The main news in *Bergens Tidende* was a murder that had taken place yesterday morning. There was a picture of the crime scene, which I thought I recognized, and I had my suspicions confirmed when I read the text underneath: The murder had been committed only a couple

of blocks from where I was sitting now. And as if that wasn't enough the suspected murderer was still at large. He was 18 years old and attended technical school, it said. For some reason, this made quite an impression on me. I pictured him at this moment, in a basement apartment, so I imagined, alone behind drawn curtains, which every so often he parted to see what was going on in the street, he viewed it from ankle height, his heart pounding and despair tearing at his insides because of what he had done. He punched the wall, paced the room, considering whether to hand himself in or wait for a few days and then try to get away, on board one of the boats perhaps, to Denmark or England, and then hitchhike his way down through Europe. But he had no money and no possessions, only what he stood up in.

I peered out the window to see if anything unusual was happening, uniformed officers gathering, for example, or some parked police cars, but everything was as normal, except for the sunshine, that is, which hung like a veil of light over everything.

I could talk to Ingvild about the murder, it was a good topic of conversation, his presence here, in my part of town, right now, while virtually the whole of the police force was out looking for him.





Perhaps I could write about that too? A boy who kills an old man and goes into hiding while the police slowly close in on him?

I would never ever be able to do that.

A wave of disappointment washed over me and I got up, took the plate and glass, put them in the kitchen sink, together with all the other dirty crockery I had used during the week. Petra was wrong about one thing, and that was that I didn't understand myself, I thought, looking across the resplendent green park as a woman crossed with a child in each hand. Self-knowledge was the one quality I did have. I knew exactly who I was. Not many of my acquaintances knew as much about themselves.

I went back into the living room, was about to bend down to browse through my records when it was as if my eye was dragged toward the new book. A stab of joy and fear went through me. It might as well be now, I was alone, I had nothing in particular to do, there was no reason to defer it, I thought, and picked the book up, looked over my shoulder, how could I take it down to the bathroom unnoticed? A plastic bag? No, who on earth takes a plastic bag with him to the toilet?

I OGLED THE LONG-LEGGED RED-LIPPED WOMAN STANDING OUTSIDE, THE EROTIC LINES OF HER BODY.

I opened the button of my jeans and unzipped, pushed the book down, covered it with my shirt, leaned forward as far as I could to see what it looked like, whether anyone would realize I had a book there.

Maybe.

What about taking a towel with me? If anyone came I could casually hold it over my stomach for the few seconds the encounter lasted. Then I could have a shower afterward. Nothing suspicious about that surely, going to the toilet and then having a shower.

And that was what I did. With the book stuffed down my trousers and clasping the biggest towel I had I went out the door, crossed the landing, down the stairs, along the corridor, into the bathroom, where I locked the door, pulled out the book and began to leaf through.

Even though I had never masturbated before and wasn't exactly sure how to do it, I still knew how, the expressions "jerk off" and "beat the meat" had been ever-present in all the wanking jokes I had ever heard over the years, not least in soccer changing rooms, and so with the blood throbbing in my member I took it out of the little pouch formed by my underpants, and as I ogled the long-legged red-lipped woman standing outside a kind of holiday bungalow in the Mediterranean somewhere, judging by the white walls and the gnarled trees, beneath a line of washing, with a plastic bowl in her hand, although otherwise completely naked, while I looked and looked at her, all the beautiful erotic lines of her body, I wrapped my fingers around my dick and jerked it up and down. At first the whole shaft, but then after a few times only the tip, while still staring at the woman with the bowl, and then as a wave of pleasure rose in me, I thought I should look at another woman too, to make maximum use of the book, and turned over the page, and there was a woman sitting on a swing, wearing only red shoes with straps up her ankles, and then a spasm went through me and I tried to bend my dick down to ejaculate into the toilet, but I couldn't, it was too stiff, so instead the first load of sperm hit the seat and slowly oozed down while later blobs were pumped out, farther down, after I had the great idea of leaning forward to improve the angle.

Oh.

I had done it.

I had finally done it.

There was nothing mysterious about it after all. On the contrary, it was incredibly easy and quite remarkable that I hadn't done it before.

I closed the book, wiped the seat, washed myself, stood stock still to hear if, contrary to expectation, anyone was outside, shoved the book back down my trousers, grabbed my towel and left.

It was only then that I wondered if I had done it right. Should you shoot into the toilet? Or maybe the sink? Or a wad of rolled-up toilet paper in your hand? Or did you usually do it in bed? On the other hand, this was an extremely secretive business, so it probably didn't matter if my method deviated from the norm.

Just as I had put the book down on the desk, folded the unused towel and placed it in the cupboard there was a ring at the door.

I went out to answer it.

It was Yngve and Asbjørn. Both were wearing sunglasses, and as on the previous occasion there was something restless about them, something about Yngve's thumb in his belt loop and Asbjørn's fist in his trouser pocket or them both standing half-turned away until I opened the door. Or perhaps it was the sunglasses they didn't take off.

"Hi," I said. "Come in!"

They followed me into my room.

"We were wondering if you felt like coming with us into town," Yngve said. "We're going to some record shops."

"Great," I said. "I've got nothing to do anyway. Right now?"

"Yes," Yngve said, picking up the book with the naked women. "I see you've bought a photography book."

"Yes," I said.

"It's not hard to guess what you're going to use that for," Yngve laughed. Asbjørn chuckled too, but in a way that suggested he wanted this aspect of the visit over as quickly as possible.

"These are serious pictures, you know," I said as I put on my jacket, bent over and tied my shoes. "It's a kind of art book."

"Oh yes," Yngve said, putting it down. "And the Lennon poster has gone?"

"Yes," I said.

Asbjørn lit a cigarette, turned to the window and looked out. ■



A full-page photograph of a woman with long dark hair, nude, sitting on a large, light-colored rock in a desert landscape. The background shows more rocks and sparse vegetation under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

MYLA
DALBESIO
ON

*how to
photograph
a woman*

Three days, three locations and three cameras. The rising female artist and once controversial face of *Call in Klein* turns the lens on herself





You may not recognize her name, but you probably know about Myla Dalbesio. In 2014 she became the face of a Calvin Klein underwear campaign that sparked a heated debate about standards of female beauty. Because of her body type, Myla was celebrated in the media as “Calvin Klein’s first plus-size model.” She was a size 10, whereas many models wear size four or six. To put this in context, size 14 is the national average for women. She was interviewed on *and* and the public conversation on blogs and social media focused on the modeling industry’s questionable expectations for women’s bodies. For a while Myla became the poster child for positive self-image. But today she’s over it. “I’m happy to talk about it, and I feel passionate about it—but can we change the conversation, please? Can we talk about something else?”

Yes, let’s change the conversation. It’s hard not to once you get to know the real Myla, a multidisciplinary artist whose practice is influenced by “sexual femininity, mystical nature and the place where the two meet.” A few years ago she began photographing herself nude in hotel rooms for a project titled “I’m naturally attracted to women’s bodies. As a woman, like others, I’m focused on my own,” she says. “For me, these photos were about having an organic form—the female body—in the middle of the hard, lonely symmetries of hotel rooms. It was about traveling and how the concept of loneliness is something that can be enjoyable and pleasurable.”

For this story Myla traveled alone from her home in New York City to California. Her stopping points: the sweeping Joshua Tree National Park, the sun-soaked streets of Los Angeles and two of Palm Springs’ most stylish boutiques, the Ace Hotel and Hotel Lautner. Her equipment: a Polaroid, a Contax point-and-shoot and a photo booth. Her task: illustrate a visual lesson in how to shoot a woman, by the same woman.

“I was terrified going into this project,” Myla admits, laughing. “I usually shoot only in controlled environments, and the last time I took a solo road trip was 10 years ago. I was terrified of being alone for that long.”

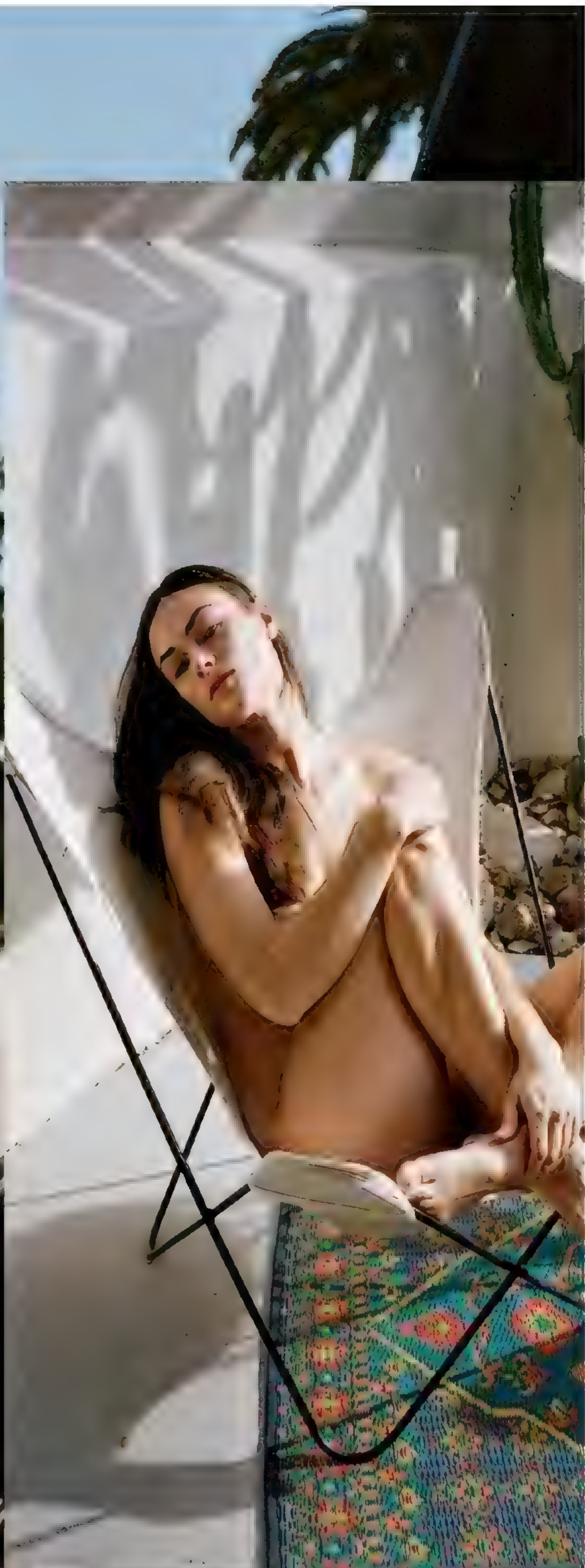
Despite those doubts, the results are magnificent. “It was three days of pushing myself, chasing light, setting up the tripod, pushing the 10-second self-timer, scrambling around naked with no shoes on, feeling cactus needles lodge in my feet and getting into position. And then doing it over and over again. I almost broke down, but out of that came clarity.”

It was worth it, and for Myla the message is evident. “There’s an accepted idea that women who are free with their bodies—be they strippers, nude models or porn stars—are broken, put-upon. That’s sad and disappointing,” she says. “It doesn’t have to be like that. My self-portraits—call them selfies if you want, I don’t care—have changed my self-image over time. Seeing beautiful photos of myself has bolstered me. It makes me feel better. If girls want to take gorgeous photos of themselves, or if boys want to, who the fuck cares?”



**“Why is it that if
a girl decides to pose nude,
people think
she’s not a
feminist?”**
—Myla

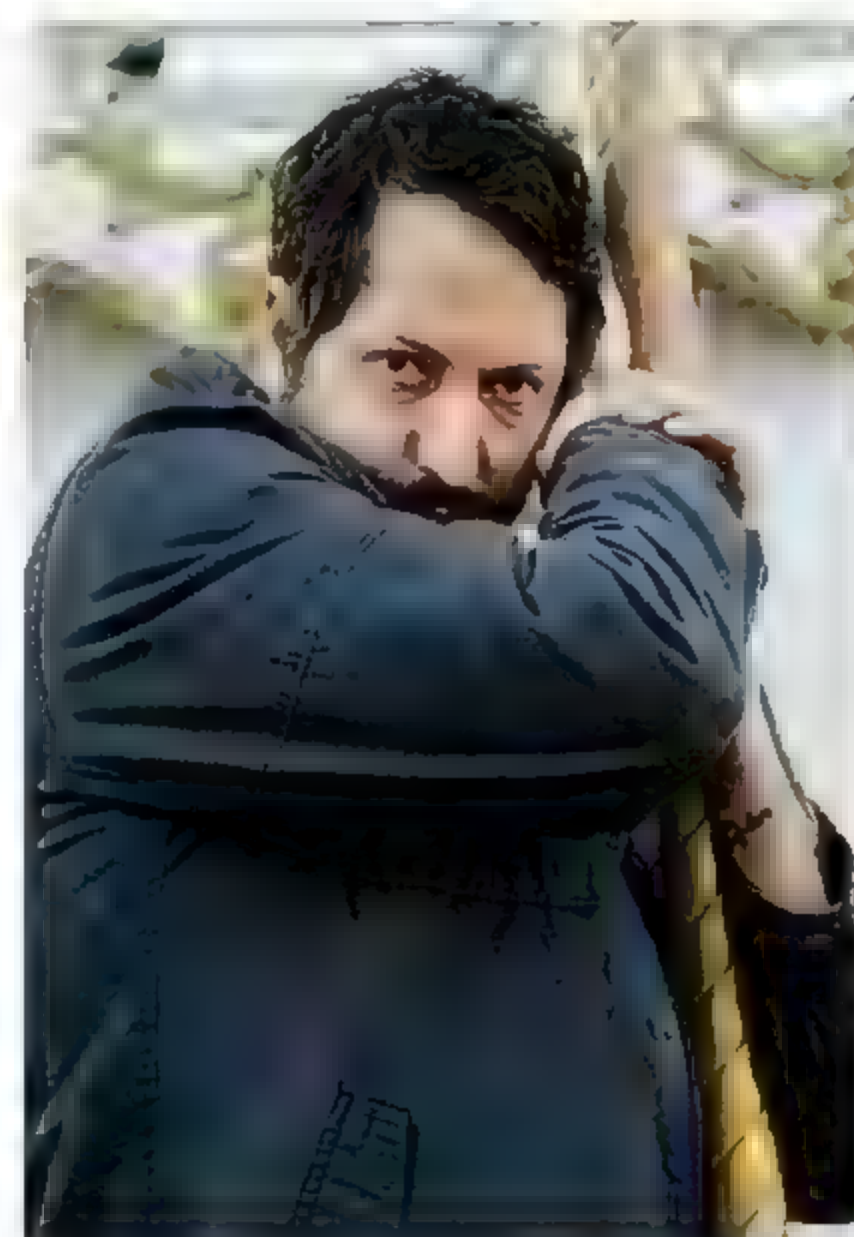




JAY HOWELL



Long before he designed the main characters on the Fox cartoon series Bob's Burgers or co-created Nickelodeon's Sanjay and Craig, Jay Howell liked to draw his lanky bug-eyed figures onto the pages of found magazines (like this one) and free-bin erotic novels. "It kind of satisfied my sick desire to feel like I'd accomplished something bigger," he says. "It's like, Hey, I'm part of the magazine now!" In addition to showing his work up and down the coast and illustrating skateboard decks for Consolidated and for Creature, the Bay Area native is probably the only artist with both Vans and Gucci collaborations under his belt. And now that the self-described "posh spaz" is our inaugural Artist in Residence, Howell's dream of appearing in the magazine has actually come true. He tells us he loves to "get high and fly first class" with a PLAYBOY in hand, and he excitedly describes how the great Shel Silverstein, having served as head cartoonist here in the 1950s and 1960s, traveled the globe as a sort of illustrator-journalist for the magazine. "I mean, imagine that. That's so fun!" Clearly the two artists have a connection beyond the Rabbit banner: Their work just feels good. "I try to be in a good mood constantly, so yeah, I'm a hippie," Howell says, adding, "but I also own guns and love to drive fast cars."—Kevin Shea Adams







DRINKS

How to Pick Up Your Bartender

The owner of Brooklyn's Leyenda tells you how to ask her for a date

I've been bartending for more than 10 years in all sorts of bars in all sorts of countries. I've seen pickups that have gone incredibly well and have wanted to ask the guy (or lady, for that matter) about his technique and just how he did it. Much more often, though, I've seen epic train wrecks, just crash-and-burn types of scenarios—the kind of thing that makes me want to hide behind my bar to avoid the shrapnel. But sometimes I can't escape, and that's because it's me they're trying to come on to. Want to pick up a bartender? Here's the approach:

You know what's great? Nice people. So be nice. And be chatty. I love it when someone at my bar actually wants to chat rather than stare at his cell phone. It's a breath of fresh air and sure to get my attention. That said, Friday night at 10:30 isn't the time to ask me my life story.

I owe you *nothing*. Sorry, but just because you're buying a drink and tipping handsomely doesn't mean you own me. I work in the hospitality industry. That means my job is to be nice to you and—you guessed it—serve you drinks. Nothing else.

I'm good at my job and I like it. A lot of people in this field are here because they love it, and some have left other, more mainstream jobs to be here. Don't assume because I sling drinks that I'm a failed actress/singer/model. Bartending is a career. If you're trying to pick me up, you should think what I do is cool, because it is.

To my bros out there: Don't get upset if you're served a drink that's pink or in a coupe glass. That's just being douchey. No self-respecting bartender will go home with someone who cares about something so stupid. I can

drink mezcal or scotch or rye on the rocks—why can't you enjoy that pink drink? Get rid of the outdated cocktail biases and enjoy.

Ask if you can buy me a drink. Key word here: ask. I may not want one. And if you do buy me one, ask what I like. This goes without saying when you're trying to pick up anyone—be it the bartender or the lady sitting next to a vacant chair. If you're well versed in cocktails, suggest one you've had before and ask if I've ever had it or would like to try it. Do I like manhattans? Why yes, I do! Have I ever had a Bensonhurst? Maybe not. (See recipe at right—if you like the classic manhattan, ordering one of these could be good for you, or for her.)

If you have the nerve to leave your number on your receipt, you should have the nerve to tell me you've done so. When you pay, say you'd love to take me out sometime and that your number is on the receipt. Don't ask for my number. That's awkward, and I may not want to give it.

The best thing to do is become a regular and get to know the bartender. I've become good friends (and yes, scored a few dates) with guys on the other side of the bar. Generally it's because they've come in again and again. It's nice to know the bartender, and it's nice for us to know you.

And here's the drink I'd want you to buy (or make for) me:



The Bensonhurst

1½ oz. rye whiskey

¾ oz. dry vermouth

½ oz. Cynar

½ oz. maraschino liqueur

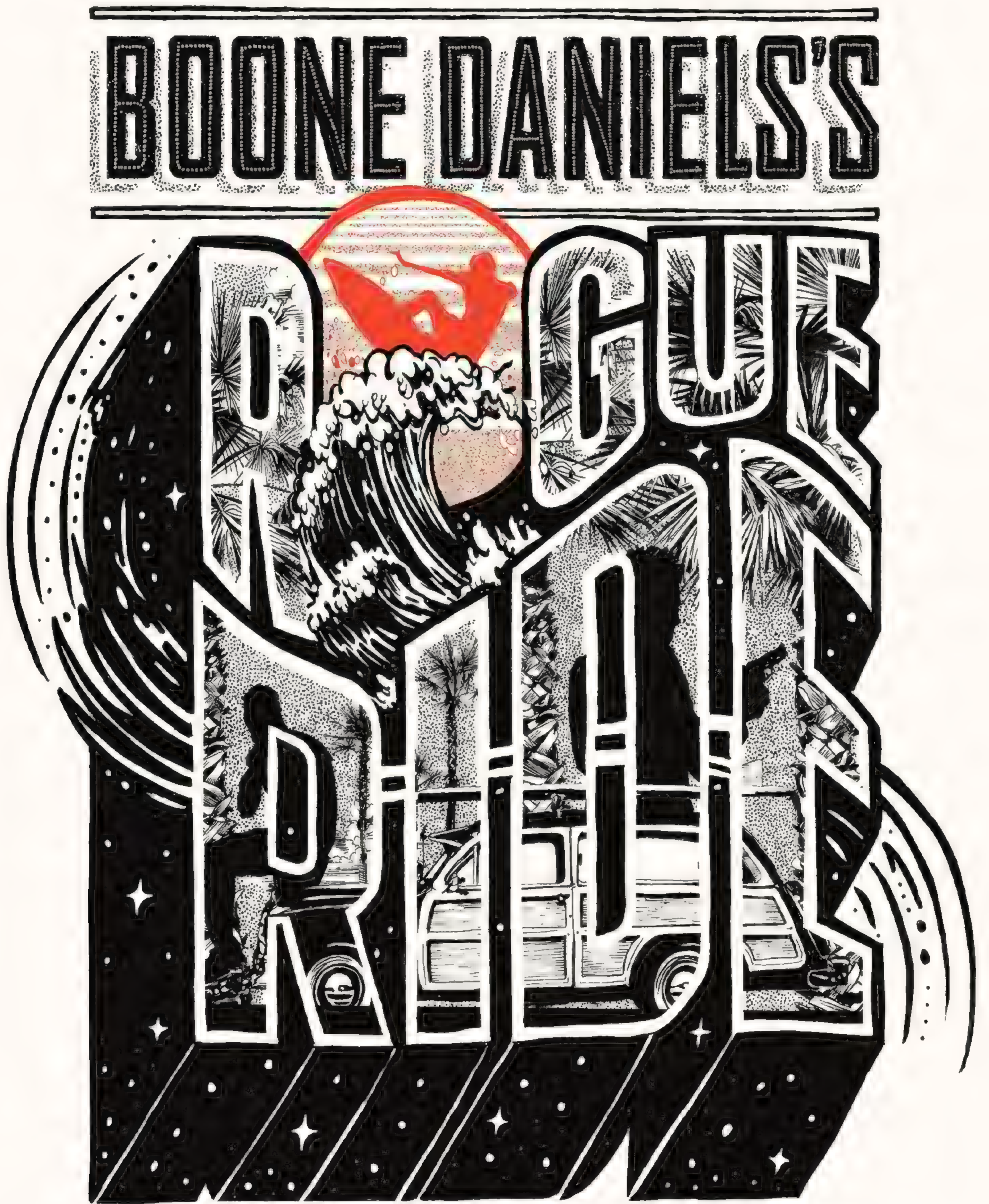
Stir in a pitcher filled with ice, strain into a cocktail glass and serve with a lemon twist.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WIISSA





FICTION



BY **DON WINSLOW**



FICTION

There are some waves you shouldn't ride. ¶ Boone Daniels has always known this but realizes it anew as he drops a microsecond late into an eight-foot left whipped up by an offshore wind.

It's winter and the Dawn Patrol is out in force—not at their usual spot off Crystal Pier in Pacific Beach but way up at Swami's, where the big north swell that just arrived is going off.

Johnny Banzai is out there, and Dave the Love God. High Tide and Sunny Day and Hang Twelve. Boone's crew.

His people, his friends.

It's high tide, no beach, and a wicked backwash bounces off the bluff.

Boone tries to check out, but the wave won't let him. It holds him in, then bounces him and he knows he's going off the board and there's nothing he can do but wait it out.

The hydrodynamics change and he feels the leash jerk his ankle as the board shoots ahead, pulling him into the bluff. The physics won't let him bend up and unsnap the leash. Every serious surfer practices for this, trains to hold his breath, not panic and keep track of which way is up so that when the wave finally releases him, he won't do further damage by plunging down instead of up.

The wave crashes him against the bluff and he turns to take the blow on his shoulder. There's a moment of calm that he uses to grab his leash and climb up it to the surface, where he sees another wave about to roll in on him.

He ducks and it smashes him against the bluff again.

Boone comes up and thankfully that was the last of the set and he can make it to the narrow stretch of shore south of the point.

He's bruised and cut, but he's alive.

His board, however, is snapped in two.

...

When Boone gets up to the little parking lot above Swami's, Alan Burke is waiting for him, leaning against his classic 1951 Ford woodie.

Burke is San Diego's best defense attorney.

He looks at Boone's snapped board.

"Bummer."

Boone nods. It was a fine board that had a lot of rides under it, a lot of history. He'll miss it.

"You going out?" Boone asks as he walks to his van.

"Too big for me," Burke says, following him.

"I know my limitations."

Boone respects that, figures that Burke came out just to look.

"Actually, I figured I'd find you here," Burke says. A north winter swell, Swami's is where you'll find the real gunners. "I didn't figure you'd almost drown, though."

"What's up?" Boone asks, unzipping the back of his O'Neill winter suit and toweling off. There are streaks of blood on the towel. Then he pulls on a heavy sweatshirt with a hood.

It's cold.

"I want to hire you," Burke says, "as my investigator on a case."

"What's the case?" Boone asks.

"Joe Phillips."

"Forget it," Boone says.

Phillips killed a cop.

...

Justin Healey was just three years on the job.

An Iraq vet with a wife and a little kid.

He was sitting in his squad car parked outside a 24-hour convenience store up in North County when a guy came up from behind and shot him in the face. The responding officers found Joe "Trashbag" Phillips, a homeless drunk, walking with the gun, a shitty old AMT Hardballer, half a mile away.

His prints were on it.

The paraffin test showed residue on his hands.

And he confessed.

Slam dunk.

Boone's only surprised that Trashbag made it to the house at all and wasn't shot resisting arrest with a firearm in his hand.

Well, he's also surprised that Burke has the case. Alan Burke is expensive. Trashbag should have gotten a PD, and then side out.

"I'm with the Equality Project," Burke, a liberal Democrat in a town with a conservative Republican bar, explains now. "My number came up."

"Mine didn't," Boone says, getting into his van.

His shoulder hurts and he wants a hot shower.

Boone left the San Diego police force under a cloud, not exactly popular with all his brother officers.

But they were his brother officers.

And Boone, although he didn't know Healey, isn't going to help defend a cop killer.

"You don't know the facts," Burke says.

"I know enough."

"The motto of the ignorant," says Burke.

Boone lets out a huff of air. "Give me 30 minutes. I need a shower. You can buy me breakfast at the Sundowner."

Burke smiles.

...

A hot shower after a cold ocean is one of life's greatest pleasures.

Boone has a shower in his small office on the second floor above Pacific Surf. When he comes out, Cheerful is sitting at his desk, going over the numbers.

Cheerful is a saturnine old real estate billionaire whose sobriquet is an ironic comment on his caustic personality, the way you call a tall man Shorty or a skinny guy Fatso. Boone loves him, though, and not only for the fact that Cheerful has made it his hobby to try to manage the finances of Boone's private investigation business.

Boone starts to get dressed.

"Where are you going?" Cheerful asks, frowning. He had hoped to torture Boone in the hot sea of red ink spilled across his monthly statement.

"To meet Alan Burke."

"Good," Cheerful says. "You need income."

"That's too bad," Boone says, "because I'm not taking the case."

Boone walks downstairs.

Hang Twelve, a soul surfer with six toes on each sandaled foot, is behind the counter.

"Boone," Hang Twelve says. "That was some wave you rode."

"It rode me," Boone says, walking out the door.

The Sundowner is a surf joint just half a block down the street in Pacific Beach. Iconic boards hang from its ceilings, surf posters on its walls. At night it's a club for the partying PB crowd, but in the daytime it serves surfer food—protein and carbs.

Burke's already in one of the booths.

He has a file out on the table.

Boone slides in across from him.

"I ordered," Burke says, knowing that Boone has no need to. The second they see him come in, the cooks fire up his regular—eggs *machaca* with black beans and flour tortillas on the side and a mug of black coffee.

Boone is the unofficial security at the Sundowner.

He keeps an eye on the place.

ILLUSTRATION BY GEMMA O'BRIEN

FICTION

In exchange, the place looks out for him.
 “What facts don’t I know?” Boone asks. He doesn’t like disappointing Alan, so he wants to get it over with.

“There were no witnesses,” Burke says.

“He had the weapon.”

“He says he picked it up in a ditch.”

Boone has to admit to himself that part makes sense. Joe Phillips is called Trashbag for a reason—he walks up and down the Pacific Coast Highway in North County with a black plastic trash bag into which he throws stuff he finds along the road. Unkind wags have joked that there should be a sign along the road—THESE MILES SPONSORED BY TRASHBAG PHILLIPS.

There are a lot of stories about him—he was a millionaire who lost everything, he was an average guy who lost his mind when his wife died, he was a highly decorated war hero whose body came home but whose mind didn’t.

Boone doesn’t believe any of them.

And he believes that Joe Phillips killed a cop.

“Positive residue test,” Boone says.

“Middle Ages technology,” Burke says. “They might as well have dunked him in the river like a witch.”

“He confessed.”

“Oh, come on,” Burke says. “Trashbag has a wet brain. And you know how this works—a good detective in the room could make this guy say anything.”

He slides some paper across the table.

Boone looks at the transcript of the interview.

First thing he looks at is the interviewing detective’s name.

Steve Harrington.

Harrington was instrumental in Boone’s leaving the force. Boone is a gentle man with few, if any, hatreds.

But he hates Harrington, and the feeling is returned in spades.

Burke tries to suppress a smile. He knows he’s played a potentially winning card and presses. “You know what you won’t see anywhere in that

interview, Boone? Motive. Why did Trashbag just walk up and shoot a cop? Why?”

“He’s psychotic?” Boone says. “Voices in his head? Jim Beam told him to? I dunno, and it doesn’t matter.”

If you have means and opportunity, you don’t need motive.

“All I’m asking you to do is meet him, okay?” Burke says. “Just meet him.”

Sunny Day strides over with Boone’s food.

That’s what Sunny does, she strides. Probably the best surfer in PB, maybe in San Diego, her long legs won’t do anything but stride. She sets the plate in front of Boone and says, “You got your ass kicked out at Swami’s. Sorry about your board.”

“Thanks.”

“I’m going out again after my shift.”

Although Sunny’s a better surfer than Boone is, he worries about her. “Be careful.”

“Always,” Sunny smiles and then walks away.

She and Boone have an on-and-off thing going. Right now it’s off, but he’s still her best friend in the world and she’s his.

Burke watches Sunny stride away and says to Boone, “You’re an idiot.”

“I know.”

He digs into the food.

Boone tries to keep life simple. Good surfing, good food, good friends—that’s life. He tries to make a living without doing anything too sleazy, and he tries to do the right thing.

This isn’t always easy given his line of work.

“Okay,” he says after taking a bite of a warm flour tortilla. “I’ll meet him. But that’s all.”

The black beans are excellent.

...

Maybe Trashbag didn’t do it.



This conclusion really pisses Boone off as he drives his van away from Central Holding.

He’d sat across the table from Trashbag and listened as Burke took him through the whole thing, and Boone had never seen a more confused man in his entire life.

It was hard to imagine this scared, small white-haired man—clearly a long-gone alcoholic—picking up a gun and firing into anybody, never mind a cop. And he couldn’t answer basic questions—

What did Healey look like?

What time was it?

And—

Why did you do it?

Trashbag just said that he was done answering questions and they could do whatever they wanted with him, he didn’t give a shit. He seemed a lot more concerned that the jail was dirty and they wouldn’t let him clean it up.

As they left the building, Boone said, “Go with the insanity defense.”

“A cop killer?” Burke asked. “What San Diego jury is going to accept that? They can’t wait to strap him to the gurney.”

Burke was right, Boone thought.

He’d seen the TV coverage.

The funeral.

The officers in their dress uniforms.

“Amazing Grace” on the bagpipe.

The grieving widow with the little boy.

Burke would try to get the trial moved, but it wouldn’t happen. No judge would risk it. San Diego is a military town that loves its soldiers,

**BOONE TRIES TO MAKE A
 LIVING WITHOUT DOING
 ANYTHING TOO SLEAZY.
 THIS ISN’T ALWAYS EASY.**



FICTION

sailors, marines and its cops, many of whom are former military.

Trashbag is fucked.

Burke pressed him to take the case.

Boone said he'd think it over.

Now, driving back to PB, he does. "No" is the smart answer, because "yes" brings a big wave down on his head. PIs have to work with cops or they can't work, so taking on a cop killer defense is, career-wise, sticking a gun into his own mouth.

He wins the Phillips case, he loses his living.

Boone knows how it works—the whole city comes at him. His license gets looked at, safety inspectors find problems in his office, he gets stopped for running every yellow light.

And then there are the relationships.

The other detective on the case is John Kodani.

Johnny Banzai, one of Boone's best surfing buddies and closest friends. Boone has dinner at his house, chats with his wife, plays on the floor with his kids.

And he's a good cop.

Whose career will get jammed up if a cop killer skates.

Or if he got the wrong guy.

No, Boone thinks as he pulls into a parking slot outside Pacific Surf, this is a lose-lose proposition. Any way it turns out, you're fucked.

He decides to call Alan and take a pass.

There are hundreds, maybe thousands of innocent people behind bars, Boone thinks as he goes up the stairs. Trashbag might be better off there. Three meals a day and a bed, anyway.

He calls Burke.

"Okay," Boone says. "I'm in."

Even though he knows that there are some waves you shouldn't ride.

...

Boone goes back to the file.

When he goes down to his van later, a parking ticket is stuck on the windshield, his left tail-light is smashed and there's a "fix it" ticket for that too.

It's just starting, Boone thinks.

This is only the small shit.

...

Akemi, the young Chaldean guy behind the counter of the convenience store, gives Boone a sardonic smile. "Did I know Trashbag? That's not exactly the way I'd put it, my brother."

The Chaldeans are Iraqi Christians. Many of them immigrated to San Diego during the war, and now they own a lot of the local convenience stores.

Good people, Boone thinks.

"How exactly would you put it?" Boone asks.

"He'd walk by here every night," Akemi says.

"Same time. I think he lives down in the underpass, a lot of them do."

"Every night?" Boone asks.

"With that black garbage bag over his shoulder," Akemi says.

"Was he a problem?"

"Not really," Akemi says. "We threw him out a few times when he'd try to pocket the little booze bottles here at the counter. But I didn't think he was a bad guy, just sad, until he did this terrible thing."

He shakes his head.

"Did Officer Healey come in here every night?"

Akemi smiles. "Like clockwork."

Boone knows what the smile means. The coffee is on the house. He doesn't have anything against it and neither does Akemi. Convenience stores like cops coming in, and the job should have its small perks.

"What did you see that night?" Boone asks.

"Like I told the detectives," Akemi says. "I heard shots. I called 911."

"You stayed inside."

"Trouble will find you," Akemi says. "You don't have to go out and look for it."

This, Boone thinks as he leaves the store, is true.

...

Boone walks the dirt path along the side of the road.

It's well worn, trod by the homeless.

They have their routes and their routines, Boone knows. It keeps them barely attached to the world.

He stops half a mile from the store at the spot where the arresting officers picked Trashbag up with the murder weapon. There's not a lot around—some warehouses, a vacant lot.

Boone walks down to the highway underpass that Trashbag called home.

The cops periodically "clean them out," but the homeless come back at night. Now there are cardboard boxes and a few old blankets. Some old plastic jugs for drinking water, some empty half-pint booze bottles and cigarette butts.

One of the blankets moves.

A woman—at least Boone thinks she's a woman—pokes her head out.

"I'll go," she says.

"It's okay."

"You a cop?"

"No," Boone says. Not anymore. "What's your name?"

"Mary."

**"TROUBLE
WILL FIND
YOU," AKEMI
SAYS. "YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO GO OUT
AND LOOK
FOR IT."**

"Mary, I'm Boone. You know a guy they call Trashbag?"

"That Joe, he's gone now," Mary says.

"Hey, Mary?" Boone asks. "Did Joe have a gun?"

"Joe, he didn't," Mary says. "He wanted one, though."

"Why?"

Mary whispers. "Said he was gonna kill a cop."

Boone feels his heart sink.

Trashbag did it.

"A cop named Healey?" Boone asks.

"No," Mary says. "That Healey, he was nice, he would bring food sometimes. Joe liked him."

"So..."

Mary smiles. Her teeth, what there are of them, are black. "If Joe kills anyone, it would be Langdon. That Langdon, he's mean. Always moving us along, shoving us around. Joe said he would take care of it. You can't push that Joe too far. I'll leave now."

"No, go back to sleep," Boone says. He takes 10 bucks from his pocket and lays it on her blanket. "Then get yourself something to eat, okay?"

But she's already asleep.

...

Trashbag Phillips killed the wrong cop, Boone thinks.

Drunk, he mistook Healey for Langdon, walked up and "took care of it." To defend the only family he knew.

Boone goes back to the office and gets on the computer.

To try and answer the question—who is Joe "Trashbag" Phillips? Is he the kind of



FICTION

man who'd take care of things with a gun?
Turns out he is.

Boone tracks down a bunch of legends about Trashbag—he's not a former millionaire, not a grieving widower, but he is a war hero.

Vietnam, Tet Offensive.

Already wounded, Staff Sergeant Joseph Phillips counterattacks an NVA unit that hit his company hard. Kills seven NVA, drags two of his buddies to safety and holds the position until the choppers get there.

That's how the Silver Star citation read.

So he is the kind of guy who would defend his people with a gun.

Case is pretty much closed, but Boone goes back to the file to make sure he has it all tied up.

Then he sees it.

...

Boone finds Darren Langdon at a shooting range all the way out in El Cajon.

He waits in the lobby and leafs through a gun mag as the cop finishes taking out a silhouette target with his Glock.

Three in the chest.

Three in the head.

Langdon comes out.

Tall, short black hair, handsome.

Definite alpha male.

"Officer Langdon?" Boone says, showing his ID. "My name is Daniels. I'm an investigator assisting in the defense of Joe Phillips."

"Yeah, I know who you are." It's pretty clear from the look of disgust on his face that he

doesn't much like who Boone is. "Didn't you let a baby killer go before you left the job? Now you're trying to spring a cop killer."

"Just a couple of questions," Boone says.

"Get out of my way."

"Don't make us do this the hard way," Boone says. "I came here as a courtesy. I can get a subpoena."

Langdon sighs. "What do you want to know?"

"Did you ever see Phillips before you arrested him?" Boone asks.

"Read the file."

"It says you hadn't," Boone says. "But he walked that way every night, on your tour."

"If I knew every bum on my tour——"

"You used to shove him around, though, didn't you?" Boone asks.

Boone sees Langdon's face go all red.

So it's true.

"I got a 10 double zero and I went after the shooter," Langdon says. "I found him. We done?" 10-00. Radio code for "officer down."

"Did you lie about knowing him," Boone asks, "because you think maybe he shot Healey instead of you?"

"Justin Healey was my best friend," Langdon says. "I'm his boy's godfather."

"I know. That's maybe why——"

A knot of men have gathered behind him.

Off-duty cops, Boone knows. Something you find at firing ranges. They all give Boone the stink eye, and one of them says, "Get the fuck out of here, shithead."

That seems to make Langdon more aggro. "Why don't you and I go outside?"

Boone says, "I'm confused. Do you want me to go outside to leave or so you and I can dance?"

"You call the wolf," Langdon says, "you get the pack."

"All together or one at a time?"

"Your choice, asshole," Langdon says.

Boone puts his hands up. "I'm sorry for your loss."

As he goes out the door, he hears laughter and shouts of "Pussy!" and "Bitch!" and "Turncoat!"

Boone sits in his van and takes a deep breath.

If I was them, he thinks, maybe I'd act the same way.

...

The black-and-white pulls Boone over on Garnet Avenue. "License and registration, please."

"Come on, man," Boone says.

He knows Juan Garza from his days on the job.

"Step out of the car, sir," Garza says. "I'm going to search the vehicle."

"On what grounds?"

"I smelled marijuana," Garza says.

"As I drove past?" Boone asks.

"Please step aside."

Boone steps aside while Garza takes the van apart, front and back, and none too neatly. He knows Garza isn't going to find anything but wet suits, fins, booties, some In-N-Out wrappers and a few old go-cups.

Unless, of course, he plants something.

"Find anything?" Boone asks.

"You have 13 days to get that taillight fixed."

"Okay."

He knows it's not going to stop there.

...

That night Boone sits in his small cottage at the end of Crystal Pier.

The other cottages are part of the hotel, but Cheerful used his considerable leverage to buy this one, and he rents it out at a nominal fee. Boone helped him out of a bad blackmail jam once and Cheerful wouldn't take no for an answer.

The cottage sits right over the water and Boone can feel the swell roll under him.

Trashbag Phillips walked the same route every night.

He didn't own a gun.

Langdon knew him and lied about it.

He got the call and went after the shooter.

But how did he know where to go?

Boone hears a knock at the door and goes to open it.

"Tell me I hear wrong," Johnny Banzai says.

"No, you hear right."

Boone walks in and Johnny follows him.

"He's a cop killer!" Johnny, usually the most calm and rational of men, yells. "He killed a brother officer! Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

"Yes, if he did it."

"He confessed."

"I watched the video," Boone says. "Harrington worked him."

"I was on the other side of the glass," Johnny says. "Did I work him too?"

"I'd never think that, John," Boone says. "But if you take another look at the video, the transcript, I don't think you'll be happy with it."

"You know what they're calling you at the house?" Johnny says. "Traitor. There's guys that want to come over here right now and clean your clock."

"Harrington?"

"He's in the car," Johnny says. "I made him stay outside."

"Hey," Boone says, "any time he wants to dance."

**JOHNNY
GIVES HIM
A LOOK
THAT COULD
BURN
THROUGH
STEEL. "YOU
LEAVE THE
WIDOW
ALONE."**



FICTION

BOONE DROPS TO THE GROUND AS THE BULLETS WHIZ OVER HIS HEAD.

Johnny walks to the window and looks out at the dark ocean.

"You know Darren Langdon?" Boone asks.

"He's a good cop," Johnny says. "Where are you going with this?"

Boone runs it down for him.

Johnny shakes his head. "I wouldn't put it above Langdon to job a skell to clear a case. But not on his best friend. He'd want the real shooter and that's who we got."

"Then why is he lying about knowing Phillips?"

"So he doesn't get the kind of dumb, irrelevant questions you're asking now," Johnny says. "Off the statement of some old wino with a grudge against him. I know you have a beef with the job—"

"I have no beef with the job."

"Yeah, okay," Johnny says. "But you're taking it too far. You're working for the piece of shit who killed Healey, and now you want to jam Langdon up too? What happened to you, Boone?"

It's a reasonable question, Boone thinks.

Three years ago he and Harrington picked up a suspected child abductor and Boone wouldn't go along with driving out in the country and tuning him up until he told what he did with the little girl.

The skell walked.

They never found the girl.

And Boone became a pariah on the force until he finally pulled the pin and walked away.

He still asks himself if he did the right thing.

"I'm telling you, something about Langdon's wrong," Boone says.

"You're wrong," Johnny says. "I'm telling you, back the fuck off."

"Someone else who might have had a reason to kill Healey," Boone says.

"Model husband," Johnny says. "Model father. Model cop."

"Maybe he told his wife something."

Johnny gives him a look that could burn through steel. "Don't do it. You leave the widow alone. My hand to God, you go anywhere near Sharon Healey, I'll—"

"You'll what, Johnny?"

Johnny says, "Don't make us go there, Boone."

He walks out.

...

Boone's out in the water a little before first light.

Maybe his favorite time of the day, the sky a dark pearl and everything quiet.

The Dawn Patrol comes out.

Sunny, of course, in her blue winter suit. Then Hang Twelve, already a little baked.

Then High Tide, the 380-pound Samoan, the former chief of the Samoan Lords before he left the gangbang life for a job and a family. He paddles out to Boone on a board the size

of a small yacht. "Mornin', bruddah. What I hear about you? You makin' trouble again?"

"I guess so, Tide."

"You keep your chin up," Tide says, "and your head down, yeah?"

"Yeah?"

"My old boys hear things," Tide says. "Hear you might be next up for a bullet."

Boone knows that Tide doesn't gangbang anymore, but he keeps in touch with his old friends.

It's worth listening to.

Last out is Dave the Love God, his sobriquet a play

on *lifeguard*, because Dave is the most famous lifeguard in a town where kids idolize them like kids in other cities worship basketball players and because he has an equally impressive reputation among the tourist chicks as the best vacation sex this side of anywhere.

Other than Sunny, Dave is Boone's best friend. They've surfed together since they were grems.

"Where's Johnny?" Boone asks.

"Not coming out today," Dave says. "Or any day you're here."

"He told you what's up?"

"At length," Dave says.

"What do you think?"

"I think you can't save everybody," Dave says.

Which is some statement coming from a man who has saved almost everybody and still privately grieves for the ones he couldn't.

"But don't you have to try?"

"The ocean does what it does, regardless," Dave says. He looks behind him and then paddles for the wave.

Sunny comes up beside Boone. "I hear you have troubles."

"Any wisdom for me?"

"You have to decide," she says, "which waves are worth riding. Because one day, one of them is going be your last. This wave? You won't go down alone. You'll take your friends with you. And for what, Boone? Your need to be right, to be just, to make up for some sin you think you committed?"

She paddles away.

Riding in, Boone remembers that the Buddha said, "Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is the whole of a holy life."

The Dawn Patrol—these are his friends, his companions. Their camaraderie means everything to him.

And now that's torn, and he feels the tear like a wound.

...

Cheerful is in the office.

The Cheerful don't surf.

He owns a good piece of the oceanfront real



FICTION

estate in Pacific Beach but never goes near the water.

Now he says, "I've been getting calls about you."
"From?"

"The mayor," Cheerful says. "The head of the chamber. A couple of men I do business, play golf with. They think I should cancel your lease. If I want to keep doing business here."

"What did you tell them?"

"To go fuck themselves," Cheerful says. It makes him cheerful.

...

Boone picks Langdon up outside the Northern Division after his tour and follows him up through La Jolla to Interstate 5, where he gets off at the 56 and then turns in to a Hampton Inn.

Langdon gets out of the car and goes in.

Only five minutes later a red Toyota Camry pulls into the lot, and Boone sees who gets out.

He waits an hour and a half and then follows the Camry up the 5, then into Carlsbad, where it turns in to the driveway of a single-family home in a new development on a hill where they used to grow flowers.

When Sharon Healey gets out of her car, Boone gets out of the van with his hands up by his shoulders and says, "Mrs. Healey. Could I speak with you for a moment?"

Sharon's a small woman, petite, pretty.

Light brown hair, cut short.

She strikes Boone as a little timid—the unkind word would be *mousy*—but then again he figures she's probably still in shock.

"You scared me," Sharon says. "It's four in the morning. Who are you?"

"My name is Daniels, and I—"

"They told me not to talk with you."

I'll bet they did, Boone thinks.

"I know you're grieving," Boone says. "And I'm sorry to bother you. But you want them to find the man who killed your husband."

"They did."

"See, I don't think they did," Boone says. "Is your little boy at home?"

"He's spending the night with my parents." She starts to walk away from him to the house.

"How long have you been sleeping with Darren Langdon?" Boone asks.

She turns around, startled. "I—how dare you—"

"Hampton Inn," Boone says, "Carmel Valley. What's it been? Six months? A year?"

"Those are lies."

"No, they're not, Mrs. Healey," Boone says. "Now we can do this any one of several ways. You can come with me now and I'll bring you to a detective who'll take your statement, or I can tell that same detective what I know and he'll show up at your door. Which do you want to do?"

"Am I under arrest?"

"I don't have that authority," Boone says. "Adultery isn't illegal anymore, and that's all we know that you've done. But you want to get out in front of this. If Darren Langdon killed your husband, you want to be a witness, not an accomplice."

She doesn't say anything.

"Here's what I know happened," Boone says. "You and Langdon were in love and he decided to get rid of the obstacle, so he walked up and shot his best friend in the face. Then he dropped the weapon where he knew Trashbag Phillips would find it and arrested him. Only reason he didn't gun Phillips down was that there were other cops there. What I don't know is whether you knew about it, before or after."

"I'm not talking to you."

"You have a little boy with no father," Boone says. "You want him to have no mother too? Because unless you clear yourself, you're going away."



Sharon looks up. "I'll come with you."

He walks her out to the van and she climbs in.

Boone's call wakes Johnny Banzai up.

"Meet me at my place," Boone says. "Sharon Healey wants to make a statement."

"I told you—"

Boone clicks off.

...

The flashers hit just as Boone's pulling onto the pier.

"Driver, pull over."

"Get on the floor," Boone tells Sharon.

He pulls over.

The black-and-white pulls up about five yards behind him. In the rearview mirror, Boone sees Langdon walk toward the driver's side, his weapon pointed out in front of him.

"Driver, get out of the car! Put your hands behind your head and walk backward to me!"

Boone does.

Then Langdon yells, "Gun! Gun!"

Langdon fires.

Boone drops to the ground as the bullets whiz over his head.

Sharon opens her door and runs in a panic.

"Sharon, no!" Boone yells.

But it makes Langdon stop shooting and Boone gets up, grabs Sharon and runs for the pier.

Running from a cop is almost always the wrong decision.

Unless you know the cop is going to kill you and lay a throw-down weapon on your corpse.

Then run like hell.

Boone makes it onto the pier despite Sharon

**THE WAVE HITS HIM
LIKE A TYSON LEFT
HOOK THROWN FROM
THE CANVAS.**



FICTION

pulling against him and screaming, “Darren, it’s me! It’s Sharon!”

She doesn’t realize that now he has to kill her too.

Langdon’s coming up behind them.

They’re trapped.

Even if Boone had time to get into his cottage it only means he dies there instead of the pier, so he keeps them moving.

To the end.

Then there’s only one way out.

He grabs Sharon by the waist and hefts her over the rail.

Throws her into the ocean.

Then he follows.

The frigid water swallows them.

He comes back up and makes out Sharon thrashing in the dark gray pre-dawn sky and grabs her.

“It’s okay,” Boone says. “I have you.”

Except he knows it’s not okay. He can see Langdon at the end of the pier, looking for them, his gun sweeping right and left. And even if the rogue cop doesn’t kill them, the water might—they might freeze before he can swim them to the beach.

Muzzle flashes, the crack of pistol fire.

Boone pulls Sharon under the water.

She fights him, panicking.

He brings them back up to see....

In the words of Dave the Love God, “the ocean does what it does regardless.” It just doesn’t care, and now it summons up a wall of water and throws it at Boone.

A rogue wave.

Big, burgeoning, unstoppable.

You can’t outrun a wave.

You can’t outswim it either.

If he were alone, Boone would turn and face it, dive into it and under as deep as he could, but he can’t leave Sharon to drown.

So he wraps his arms around her tight as he can and gets ready for the blow.

The wave hits him like a Tyson left hook thrown from the canvas, blows him backward, takes him to the bottom and rolls him.

Over and over again, as he holds on to Sharon and tries to keep her body compact, and the wave holds them down, punishes them for their temerity in being there in the first place, and the cold is agonizing and eats up oxygen until finally it stops and Boone pushes up and—

The second wave is bigger than the first, and now they’re in the impact zone and it crashes down on their heads and explodes like a bomb and Boone can’t hold on as Sharon is blown from his arms and all he can do himself is try

to survive as the wave holds him down and his lungs scream for air and then the wave slams the back of his head on the bottom and he starts to black out and that will be death—drowning in the dark, cold water before the sun can warm him one last time.

Then a hand grabs him and pulls him up.

Dave’s in the whitewater, pulls him and then pushes him onto High Tide’s big board.

Boone gasps, “There’s a woman—”

“Sunny has her.”

Stretched across the board, Boone looks over and sees Sunny hoist Sharon onto Hang Twelve’s board.

On the pier, Johnny Banzai has his gun trained on Langdon.

“Let’s get you in,” Dave says, “before the hypothermia hits.”

They paddle toward shore.

The Dawn Patrol is out.

• • •

San Diego winter sunsets are magnificent.

Boone thinks it has to do with the clarity of the air.

He flips a piece of fish on the grill on the pier outside his cottage and asks Johnny, “Did Langdon give it up?”

“He gave her up,” Johnny says. “She pulled the trigger, but they planned it together. She says Healey beat her. I don’t know.”

“Crazy.”

“I owe you an apology,” Johnny says. “You were right.”

“I thought it was Langdon. So I was wrong too.”

Wrong about a lot of things, Boone thinks.

I was wrong about Joe Phillips.

Johnny lifts a beer to him. “Here’s to being wrong.”

It’s chilly out and they’re wearing sweat-shirts. So are Sunny and Dave. High Tide’s in a T-shirt, but Boone figures he provides his own insulation, and Hang Twelve never seems to feel the cold.

Boone slides the fish into a tortilla and hands it to Johnny.

It’s a ritual, Boone making fish tacos for the Dawn Patrol. They do it once a week, twice in the summer. Sundays, though, it’s just him and Sunny, wherever their relationship is at.

But now it feels good to have them all with him.

His friends.

His family.

The swell is over, the sea is calm.

There are some waves you shouldn’t ride, Boone thinks, looking out at the sunset.

But most of them you should.

Especially the rogues. ■

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PLAYBACK



JAMAICA, 1970

Quite a catch: Hef and Barbi Benton on a Caribbean fishing trip.



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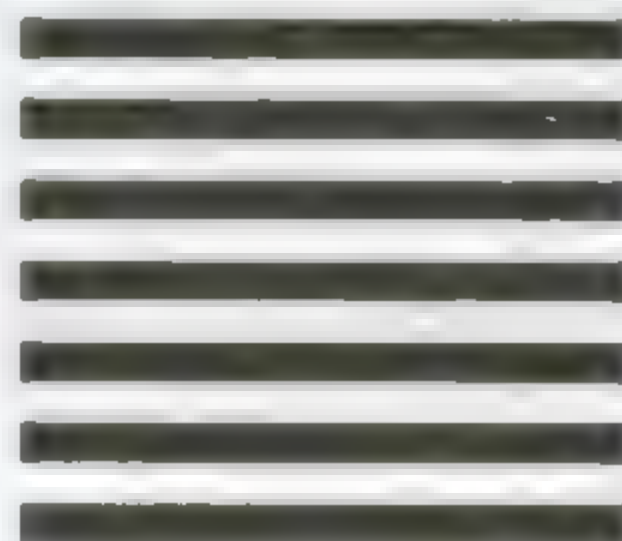
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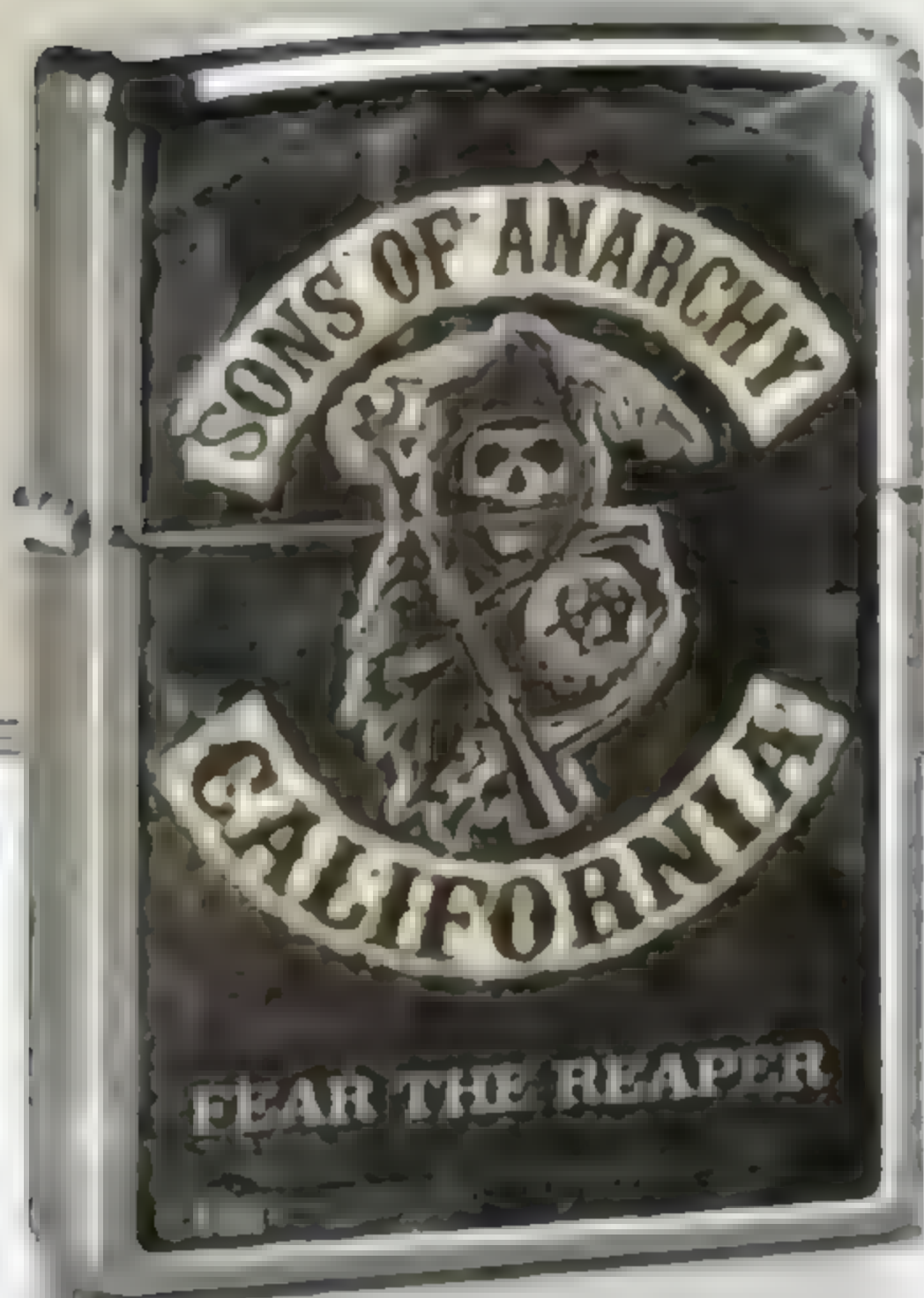


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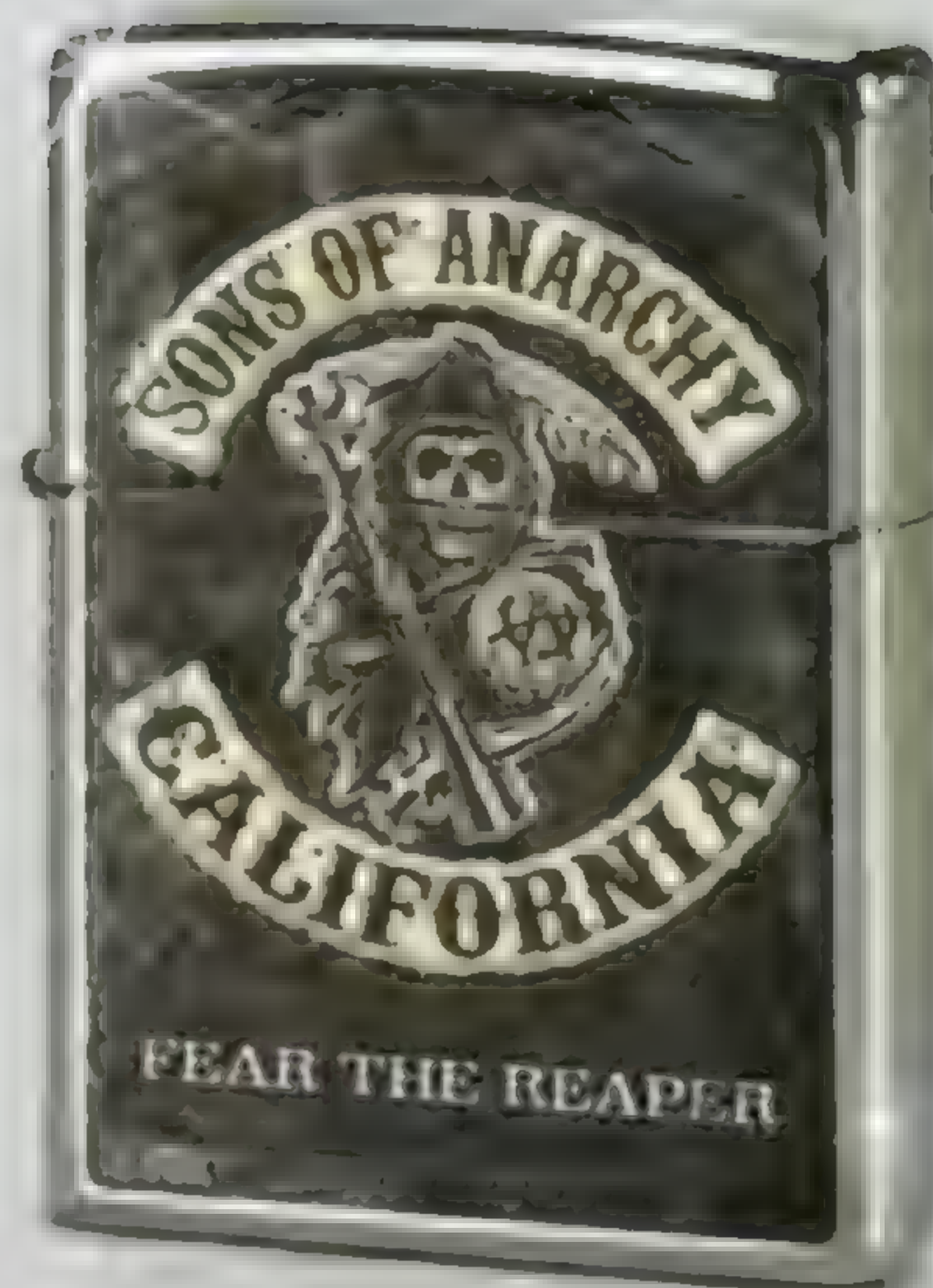
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